Legacy of pain
Memories like dark waves .... p. 10

Samaritan's horn
Violent driver ahead ..... p. 12

Near unto God
Kuyper's classic updated ..... p. 13

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Mentors provide encouragement to troubled children

Alan Doerksen

HAMILTON, Ont. — Many Canadian children suffer emotionally, do poorly in school and consider dropping out because they are affected by poverty or alienation. But mentoring programs which match children with caring adults who can provide encouragement and a listening ear are proving to be a strong positive force in the lives of these children.

In April, United Generations Ontario (UGO) published "The Ontario Mentoring Experience," a study and evaluation of 11 mentoring programs in Ontario. UGO is a coalition of human service groups dedicated to promoting programs that bring young and older people together in a spirit of mutual support.

Mel Shipman, executive director of UGO, outlines several reasons for producing the report. One is "to finally tell a story which has never been put together in a single document." He also sees the report as a helpful resource for groups wishing to start new mentoring programs. "We are hoping this will be an additional stimulus" to them, explains Shipman. So far, many people have asked for copies of the report, which UGO provides free of charge.

No role power

Mentoring is usually seen as an older person developing a one-to-one relationship with someone in need, encouraging them, giving advice and acting as a role model to them. But the UGO report suggests that a modern mentoring relationship is one in which "both parties are acknowledged as equal contributors to the relationship and to one another's well-being.... Neither party brings or attempts to display any role power over the other."

COURTESY BIG BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF CANADA

Mentors can encourage and raise the self-esteem of "mentees."

All 11 programs examined by UGO are focused on older people helping out children or youth who are at risk of dropping out of school and possibly out of their family and community. "Our concern is youth and children," explains Shipman. "We focused entirely on that mentor/'mentee' structure."

One program studied by UGO is the Big Brother In-School Mentoring Program, which was started in 1994 by the Big Brother Association of Burlington and Hamilton-Wentworth. This program is designed for elementary students who need encouragement from an adult to raise their self-esteem. It aims to increase each student's personal growth,

See **MENTORS** *page 3...*

Deacons confronted with information about schizophrenia

Jessie Schut

EDMONTON — When Bobbie Noden speaks about schizophrenia, people tend to listen. That's because she speaks from personal experience: two of her four children have the disease. What she says has a ring of truth that people can't ignore.

JESSIE SCHUT

Bobbie Noden

The mother of four is the Partnership Program co-ordinator of the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta. The program brings professionals, people with schizophrenia and family members together to work towards a better future through public education.

Noden addressed Christian Reformed deacons at the Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference annual spring meeting. Deacons and their spouses listened attentively as she told her rivetting story and challenged the church to become a partner with those who are affected by the disease.

"I'm a nurse by training," she told the group. "I thought I could handle diseases, that I was equipped to cope. But if you think schizophrenia is hard to spell, just wait till you try living with it."

Dark, angry eyes

In her family's case, schizophrenia's impact first made itself felt when her youngest was born. "When I first held him in my arms, I was taken aback at his deep, dark, angry eyes," says his mother. "After we took him home, we rarely slept more than two or three hours at a time. He was a brilliant, active child, teaching himself to read when he was three, asking deep questions, showing interest in complex issues far beyond his years. I was so proud of him!"

But there were darker sides to this child's personality, too: temper tantrums and streaks of swearing. Sometimes he did self-destructive things,like placing his hands on a hot stove burner or banging his head against the wall, or talking about suicide.

The angry, destructive behavior caused problems at school and emotional turmoil in his family. "After a while his behavior was so unpredictable, we couldn't take him anywhere," recalls Noden. "Sometimes I felt so angry that I just wanted to smack him."

After many rounds of doctors and assessments and therapy sessions, the diagnosis was finally made: their son had schizophrenia. It explained the nightmares, the fear of people and creatures following him, the voices telling him to do things.

"Getting the diagnosis was a relief," says Noden. "I thought, 'Now we can treat this disease

See **SCHIZOPHRENIA** *p. 2...*

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Schizophrenia puts family through anguish

... *continued from page 1*

and just get back to a normal life.' But it doesn't work that way."

The diagnosis was the beginning of another five years of anguish, as the young boy was shunted between hospitals and home, and seen by therapists, physicians and pharmacists in an attempt to find the best course of treatment. The Nodens found that facilities for treating childhood mental disorders are few and far between.

Their hearts were torn as they watched the boy call out for help, kicking and screaming, "Why won't you help me? Doesn't anyone care?"

JESSIE SCHUT

Bobbie and Ken Noden

More pain

Then the second blow fell. Their other son, then 15 years old, began showing signs of behavior changes: forgetfulness, inattention, withdrawal from his friends.Then came the suicide attempts, seven times within a span of a year. And once again, the diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Noden can testify to the devastating effect schizophrenia has on a family. "We were living a pretty normal, middle-class life," she says. "I had a good job which I had to quit. Suddenly, your income is cut in half. Your life is in such turmoil, you lose track of lots of things. One day we woke up to find ourselves hopelessly in debt."

Families who have a child with schizophrenia need a lot of support and counselling. The uncertain future wreaks emotional havoc as parents and siblings ask such questions as: What do we do now? Will the disease go away or will it get worse? Parents grieve the loss of hopes and dreams, and wonder how to provide for future needs for their children. Marriages come under tremendous stress, too.

Statistics show that 85 per cent of marriages end in divorce when schizophrenia comes into the family. Fortunately, says Noden, their pastor was a caring and compassionate friend who helped them sort through the misunderstandings and re-establish lines of communication.

The family also needed to investigate options: should they institutionalize their children? Should they look for a group home? What about schooling and work training? Eventually, after checking out some group homes, they realized that they could manage to provide for their children at home if there was the availability of respite care.

Public perception

Prejudice and rejection are also hazards that families face. Noden's older son was working in a school as a janitor's helper, but quickly got moved to an evening shift so he wouldn't have contact with the children.

"Every time a person with schizophrenia commits a crime, the story hits the headlines," says Noden. "Yet, the reality is that only 2 per cent of prisoners have the disease."

Social life may come to a standstill, as parents are caught up in their child's problems. "You get so tired, you just want to hide in your home," says Noden. "You don't want to take your child to church and risk having an outburst. You just wait and keep silent, praying that one day you'll have a 'normal day,' whatever that is."

For Noden, the normal day never did arrive. One day, she realized, "I can't be quiet anymore. I have to do something, I have to speak up." She got involved in the Schizophrenia Society of Alberta and developed the Partnership Program, eventually moving from volunteer to hired co-ordinator. She believes strongly that public education and awareness will greatly benefit those who must live with schizophrenia and their families.

Noden's work in the Partnership Program includes giving educational presentations to school children, church groups and employee organizations. Her son often accompanies her to a school, telling children what his situation is like.

One day, as they were boarding a bus to one of those presentations, a teenager whom he knew spit in his face. The boy wiped away the spit, and said, "It's okay, Mom, I guess he just didn't know any better."

Someday soon, she hopes, presentations such as the one she made to the northern Alberta deacons, and to other groups, will make a difference. People will know better — and the future will be safer and friendlier for those who have schizophrenia.

Churches can raise awareness of schizophrenia

Jessie Schut

CALGARY — What can the church do? Bobbie Noden says there are many issues that still need to be rectified, and she's counting on the general public, including caring Christians in churches, to help provide remedies.

It begins with *awareness*. Churches could help in this area by displaying literature about the illness, inviting informed speakers to address church groups, and stocking their libraries with information and resources. Pastors, elders and deacons can inform themselves of the available help from such societies as the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

After awareness comes *activism*: Christians could contribute their gifts and talents in addressing situations that need to change.

Government funding for schizophrenia research, for instance, lags far behind the funding provided for more visible illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease. While funding ranges from $50-$300 per person with those diseases, schizophrenia research receives only $11 for each person who suffers from schizophrenia.

Yet the societal cost of the disorder, both financial and emotional, is enormous. One out of 100 adults, and three of 1,000 children are affected with schizophrenia, which most commonly shows up between the ages of 16 and 30. Of those, only 20 per cent will fully recover after one or two episodes. The rest will need extensive support or hospitalization for the rest of their lives.

Caring community members could join in lobbying the government for more research funding so that ways of controlling or curing the disease can be speedily found.

Cuts in government funding have also hurt schizophrenia sufferers in other ways. With the trend to de-institutionalization, many patients are released from hospital with nowhere to go. On the one hand, more beds are needed for the acute phase of the illness; on the other hand, society also has to provide safe, structured places for those who are released. In both situations, an informed public that speaks out for justice and mercy can make a difference.

Just be there

The Schizophrenia Society needs volunteers for its programs. In Alberta, for instance, the society is working on a clubhouse program that would provide a centre for socialization, housing, recreation, employment, training and other services for the mentally ill. A media watch group writes letters to the media to remedy public misperceptions and mistakes regarding the word itself, and the illness.

A housing committee is working to provide better facilities for the mentally ill, which is a major concern for members.

Another way the church could help, says Noden, is just to be there. "When someone says to me, 'Let's go for some ice cream' it can make all the difference in the world to how I look at life, and it doesn't matter if they ask me or if they ask my sons. It says to me, 'Someone cares!' After all, most people don't ask for the moon, they just need the basic necessities — food, clothing, housing, love and respect.

Facts and figures:

- Schizophrenia affects 1 out of 100 citizens (270,000 Canadians).
- It's twice as common as Alzheimer's, five times as common as multiple sclerosis, six times as common as insulin-dependent diabetes.
- 40 % of persons with schizophrenia will attempt suicide, and 10 % will succeed.
- Mental disorders require nearly 11 million hospital patient days per year in Canada, as compared to about 3 million hospital patient days for heart disease.

Thinkbit

"My daddy had a saying: We all share and share alike. Rich man has all the ice he wants in summer. Poor man has all the ice he wants in winter.

Source unknown

News

Mentors can help solve children's problems

... continued from page 1

interest in school, school attendance and academic performance.

Helen Metz, co-ordinator of this mentoring program, says many volunteers prefer to help out with an in-school program rather than an extracurricular one because of "fear of being accused of inappropriate behavior with children." The in-school program "offers an opportunity for people to volunteer and feel safe."

The in-school program was started in eight elementary schools in the Hamilton area and now operates in 27 schools. The program was copied from an American one and is now used across Canada, reports Metz. Originally, there were 40 mentor/mentee matches in the Hamilton-Burlington area, but since then, 500 mentors and mentees have participated.

The mentor's role is to meet with the mentee for one hour a week, during the school day and on school property. The purpose of the get-together is to be a friend, listen actively, and be non-judgmental. Mentors and mentees can play board games or computer games together, or work at arts and crafts. Mentors also spend one day taking their mentees to work, and some larger activities outside the school are arranged for groups of mentors and mentees.

One of the challenges children face, especially those from low-income families, is moving frequently from one school to another, says Metz. Children can have a difficult time making new friends when this happens. But mentors with the in-school program often continue their friendship with students when they transfer from one school to another.

Learning to trust

Mentors can sometimes play a key role in solving children's problems. Metz gives the example of one boy involved in the program who used to be late for school every day even though he lived next door to the school. His mentor was puzzled by this and tried to find out why the boy was always late. The boy explained that his mother slept in every morning, so when he got up to get ready for school, he would not turn on the lights so that he wouldn't disturb his mother. But having the lights out made it hard for him to find his clothes.

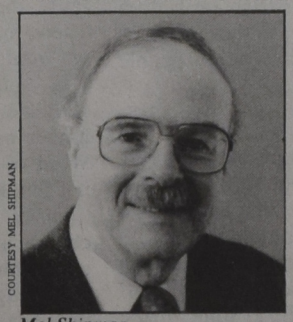
To solve the problem, his mentor suggested that the boy set out clothes the night before to make it easier to get dressed in the morning. The boy followed his mentor's advice and "for the last two months, the child has been on time every day," says Metz.

One potential problem with the program is "if you have a mentor that's not reliable," says Metz. Such a mentor disappoints a child who looks forward to meeting with him. But she notes that Big Brothers has a careful screening process for mentors that includes a police background check and providing a photo ID. The agency also monitors mentors later on.

So far, the program has had very positive results, reports Metz. One is that many of the children learn to trust an adult.

Many more children have expressed an interest in joining the program, she adds — "The children clamor for mentors."

According to the UGO report, principals at schools where the in-school program is in place report a noticeable difference in "problem" children, that is, decreased number or no further



COURTESY MEL SHIPMAN

Mel Shipman

visits to the principal's office. And teachers noticed a general improvement in the academic performance of children involved with the program as early as five months after starting.

Students involved as mentees reported that the program had a positive impact on them and tended to increase self-esteem, happiness and popularity, and to decrease anxiety levels.

Recently there has been a trend for more people in Canada to become involved in mentoring, observes Metz. "I think that mentoring is the way of the future.... Everybody could benefit from a mentor" — for instance, employees starting a new job.

Several challenges face the mentoring groups studied by UGO. "The one limiting factor with each of the agencies is budget," Shipman affirms.

The groups studied tend to have waiting lists of people wishing to have mentors, which is connected with their funding limitations. In general, government funding is decreasing for these groups, which leads to more competition for funding from other sources, such as foundations and corporations.

Some of the agencies are limited by difficulties in recruiting suitable mentors. Shipman gives the example of one agency which is required to do "very extensive police checks that take up to six months."

Shipman also sees a trend toward more people becoming volunteer mentors in Canada. "We live in an age-segregated society," he observes. "A mentor-rich society would be a healthier society." A mentoring relationship can be satisfactory for both mentors and mentees, says Shipman. "Both parties are winners."

Doctors healed her body, God healed her heart

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — More than any other image, the Pulitzer Prize-winning 1972 photograph of Kim Phuc as a young, naked child fleeing from her napalmed village during the Vietnam War captured the horrors of that war.

Rather than harbor bitterness and anger towards the Americans, however, Phuc put her Christian beliefs into action and forgave the man who ordered the bombing. Phuc told her story to a crowd of 1,600 people at a World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) function in Abbotsford recently, during the WEF general assembly.

"I live without hate or hostility to those who, during the war, caused my suffering," said Phuc, who now lives in Toronto. "I met the man who ordered the bombing, and we shared in the true spirit of Christianity, love, forgiveness and tears of rejoicing."

Scarred for life

War broke out when Phuc was nine years old. Napalm bombs ripped through her village in 1972, searing her clothes off and burning 75 per cent of her body.

WEF PHOTO

Kim Phuc (r.) embraced Pastor Ha Hieu Ho and his wife, Hguyen Thi Huynh.

"The war turned me into a miserable girl. I cried and cried," said Phuc. She said she would burst into tears when she saw other girls wearing short-sleeve shirts, because her own arms were scarred from the bombs.

"Thank God that my face and my hands, you see, are still beautiful and normal," smiled Phuc, holding up her hands to the audience.

As a child, Phuc said she was taught to believe in many gods. But after the war ended, she began to study English and explore the Bible, and eventually became a Christian.

Phuc said her Christian faith helped her work through pain and suffering and gave her a "new life, strong faith and wonderful peace." She forgave Captain John Plummer, the American who had ordered the napalming of her village, at a meeting last fall at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

When Phuc was finished speaking, assembly director Reg Reimer asked her how long it had been since she saw the Vietnamese pastor who had baptized her. Fourteen years, she answered. Seconds later, that pastor — Ha Hieu Ho — and his wife Hguyen Thin Huynh joined Phuc on stage for an emotional reunion, bringing the crowd of 1,600 to their feet.

"The doctors grafted skin onto Kim's body, but it was God who healed her heart," said Ho.

Through a translator, Ho told the audience about how the Christian church in Vietnam is growing in spite of persecution. Now ministering in California, Ho was imprisoned in 1983 in Vietnam and spent more than six years in jail there, where he continued spreading the gospel.

Ho's description of how he brought a man to Jesus while imprisoned in a solitary confinement cell drew laughs from the audience. The prisoner was in the cell below him and the pair communicated through a dry toilet pipe. Over the space of four months, Ho taught the man four hymns and several Bible verses through the pipe.

"If you want to witness for the Lord, you'll find a way," he said.

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Editorial

The sin of pride and why some men reject the gospel

I have been reflecting on the fact that so many men my age are losing interest in the church and in its message of salvation through Christ. From time to time I come across older men who have stopped going to church. I wonder why that is.

I must confess that it bothers me somewhat. It almost seems as if the Christian faith does not have the power to hold on to these men. Is religion only for weak and dependent people like myself?

Variety of reasons

One man, for example, kept on attending church for his wife's sake. But slowly on, his lack of personal conviction and enthusiasm won out and now he no longer attends.

Another man says that he has heard enough sermons to last him for the rest of his life. If he doesn't know by now, after 60 some years, what God wants of him, he'll never know.

Yet another man and his wife stopped going a long time ago because he didn't like what the church had done to him when he married someone from another denomination. He told me a story of real pain.

Who's afraid of feeling?

It has been said that men are staying away because of the feminization of the church. The more the church addresses the feeling side of faith, the more men become uncomfortable. There may be something to this, except that we would not call it "feminization."

In some instances, it may be that the church's message is getting too soft and no longer presents the two-edged sword that the Word of God always insists on being. That's not feminization but a spineless type of reductionism. In other instances, it may be that the church is moving away from the rationalistic reductionism of earlier times and finally acknowledging a fuller expression of faith that includes feeling, intuition and sensitivity in addition to clear thinking and forceful debunking of useless ideas and practices. Rejection of the former is a healthy kind of response; rejection of the latter, an escape back into authoritarian and rationalistic safety.

A case of terminal pride

What has struck me about some of these men who no longer want to be involved in church life, apart from those who have been genuinely hurt, is that they appear to be fairly satisfied with themselves. In addition, they tend to be very critical of others. Could it be, I ask myself, that pride has something to do with their rejection of the gospel?

Some people may question the fact that I equate losing interest in church with rejecting the gospel. That is, indeed, what I am doing. I have yet to be convinced that a full acceptance of the gospel of Christ can be sustained in isolation from the Body of Christ. A significant part of the gospel message is to be part of the vine and to express a visible unity of Christ in this world.

If it is pride that keeps these men from participating in the work and life of the church, then the prognosis is not good. Unadulterated pride at age 60 is too well established to be easily uprooted and may well be terminal.

No room for humility

Pride is one of what the Catholic Church used to call the seven deadly sins, along with lust, envy, greed, anger, sloth and gluttony. Not that we want to isolate these sins as having a special status, but they are major sins with a deadly effect. Pride, for example, can take hold of a person's soul and prevent that person from accepting the gospel.

The sin of pride would effectively keep one from wanting to be humble and repentant. People who feel pretty good about themselves are not going to appreciate the gospel. But they will usually rationalize away the real problem by focusing attention on the shortcomings of the church.

Men are vulnerable

Is it particularly men who are vulnerable to the sin of pride? Let's say they were successful in business, that they are used to wielding power and that they do not gladly tolerate fools. It would be relatively easy for them to feel that they are basically decent and good people. What can a church offer such men?

It could also be other sins that take hold of them: lust, greed and anger. Maybe emotionally they are stunted and resent the brokenness of repentance. Maybe they close up in many ways. Maybe their view of masculinity prevents them from surrendering (perish the thought) to a God who weeps with happiness when sinners return. The older you become the more you reap the fruits of your earlier development. All your life you may have gone through the motions. You did not dare to break with the church, or you hoped that some day the true feelings and enthusiasm would come. But now that you are entering a time of retirement, old character sins flare up (the Greek word for "character" indicates that some traits have been "scratched" into you). You become less tolerant of preachers telling you what the claims of the gospel are.

The soil is the problem

We do not want to excuse the church from sinning against some of its members. Sin happens. Pain happens. But a close reading of Scripture will teach us quickly that Christ tends to pay little attention to the hurts of proud people. There is no mention anywhere, for example, of Jesus saying to the Pharisees, "I feel your pain."

The parable of the sower comes to mind. Jesus predicted that although there's nothing wrong with the seed, the soil is not always in good shape. Either it's dense like a path, or it's superficial like rocky soil, or it's choked out by thorns and thistles. In other words, according to the parable, the problem lies with the person, not the Christian faith.

Will proud or choked-out people ever be able to understand why they are not able to believe? Probably not. They may give you an explanation that satisfies them, such as other people's hypocrisy or the failure of the church, but all they are doing is deflecting what is really bothering them.

On the other hand, if a thief can experience last-minute repentance on the cross, there is hope even for retired "scratched" men. But it takes lots of courage and lots of grace. Nothing short of the balm of Gilead will do. **BW**

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Letters

Don't worry about environmental misuse

It seems, that Mr. Hielema (CC, column, April 11) is worried about the future of the earth, as many environmentalists are. It is too bad they cannot find an answer and solve our problem of waste, pollution, greed and the sins of capitalism.

We all want to have profitable businesses or well-paying jobs (capitalism?) so that we can live in heated or cooled houses, drive cars, turn on the lights and our dishwashers, use showers or baths, TV, [communicate by] telephone, e-mail and the Internet, and produce a lot of garbage. Etc., etc. So are we all guilty of living on this earth at this time in history?

Mr. Hielema quoted Prov. 8: "He has set the heavens in place." But I am glad that it is not the end of God's dealing with the heavens (and earth) and that we do not have to rely on technology or environmentalists to uphold and maintain God's creation.

Hebrews 1:3 says, "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, *upholding the universe by his word of power*" (italics mine). The *Belgic Confession* in Article 2 says, "We know God by the creation, preservation and government of the universe."

If we really believe that God, through the Lord Jesus, upholds and governs the universe and earth, than we have to accept progress also. Because it is God who, only in the last few hundred years, gave us the wisdom to find oil and gas in the earth and how to use them, find out how to use electricity, develop communications, plastics, teflon, advanced medical knowledge, computers, satellites and split atoms.

Why was all that knowledge not given to Noah and his sons or to people in the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or to people during the Middle Ages? Because, I have to believe, it was not God's time.

God using us to destroy?

It is true, though, that humankind can and has misused God's good gifts, but that doesn't take away that God still governs the universe and is in control of all things we do.

Have Mr. Hielema and many others with him ever considered that it might be in God's plan to use human beings and the knowledge given to them to destroy the world?

In 2 Peter 3: 5-10 we read: "That we may not ignore the fact that by the Word of God heavens existed long ago and that by the same Word heavens and earth are stored up for fire." Verse 10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up."

Perhaps it is in God's plan to use sinful human beings to accomplish that.

I am looking forward to the day of Christ's return, and in the meantime use with a thankful heart all the things available to us at this time. I know that it was and is God who is in control, also now in this time of the environmental worries of some.

Mr. Hielema wonders how God will question us on Judgment Day regarding our "misuse" of the earth.

I believe that only one question will be asked and that is: Do you believe that Jesus died for all your sins? If we believe that, than all our sins will be forgiven, also the use or misuse of things provided for us in the last few hundred years.

Klaas Schenk
Edmonton

Drive like a Christian

Have you ever heard of the Christian Road Safety Association? We hadn't either until one of our readers who, with his wife, was stationed in Haiti for a year drew my attention to it in the following letter.

I remember having a discussion once with Bernie Zylstra [former president of the Institute for Christian Studies] about how Christians ought to drive. He said that if you always let someone else go first, you would get nowhere in Toronto. Christians need to be courteous but not timid, he said.

I have relearned to drive in Haiti. It's quite the experience. You have to look out for yourself in a form of aggressive defensive driving. Most cars have serious dents here. Many do not have lights even at night. People seldom signal their intentions.

The police here often drive horrendously. They think they have authority to drive that way. It may be a power thing. A couple of weeks ago, I witnessed a motorcade speeding down the middle of the road. Perhaps they were escorting a VIP. They were heading for the airport. Likely they were late. The leading cops on motorcycles were waving traffic to take to the shoulders.

So just for fun I am sending you this e-mail posting which came my way.

Ten Commandments for the Road:

1) Begin with a prayer;
2) if you start late, arrive late;
3) alcohol is for the radiator, not the operator;
4) if entry into the traffic flow is facilitated by the courtesy of another driver, wave in appreciation;
5) if you have inadvertently inconvenienced or endangered the safe passage of another vehicle, wave as an apology;
6) make it easier for aggressive opportunity-snatchers to get ahead of you — far ahead;
7) drive so that the sudden appearance of a police car is a pleasant sight;
8) give plenty of space to taxis and cars marked with dents;
9) never accelerate, and decelerate if advisable, when another car wishes to enter your lane;
10) end every trip with a prayer of thanksgiving.

This posting was exerpted from material distributed by the Christian Road Safety Association, 17 Rowan Walk, Crawley Down, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 4JP, England.

Drive carefully.

Rick Jongejan
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Classis Huron responds to Kooistra's views

In an article that appeared in the July 12, 1996, issue of *Christian Courier*, entitled "Homosexuality: A Christian's Reappraisal 30 years later," Dr. Remkes Kooistra wrote that he believes that "God allows homosexuals to be sexually active within the same bounds of morality that limit heterosexual activity."

Classis Huron, in which Dr. Kooistra resides as a retired minister, took exception to this respected officebearer's views. At its May 14, 1997, meeting, classis passed a motion to communicate publicly via *Christian Courier* that "the views expressed by Dr. Kooistra in *Christian Courier* (through his July 12, 1996, article) are in violation of the teachings of the Christian Reformed Church and of (the) Scriptures."

Classis delegates felt that "church leadership has an obligation to give clear direction in this matter, upholding Synod's (1973) conclusion that explicit homosexual practises must be condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture."

In passing this motion it was the hope of classis delegates that Classis Huron's position on this be clear to the churches.

Hilbert Rumph
Classis Huron, Stated Clerk

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Can the gospel make sense to unbelievers?

Thanks for the timely editorial on the Heaven's Gate Cult (CC, April 11). You are on the ball and keep relevant. I have appreciated much in CC, and my wife reads it all.

There is an area I should like to explore a little with you.

You state: "Ultimately, truth is apprehended only through faith." Then you ask, "So the answer [to the question "How do we know that Easter is the Archimedian point for human beings...?] will be satisfying only to those who believe in the answer?" Your response: "Not quite." You then show your own bias, I believe, by stating, "It's not far-fetched, is it, to assume that for a belief to be true, it has to affirm life on earth?".

You then ask how the suicide and castration of HG cult members can be thus construed. Next you compare the death of Jesus. You say he did not seek death. Yet the Bible says he set his face like flint for Jerusalem even though he knew full well what awaited him. If I know full well that walking into a building will trigger an explosion that will kill me but insist on doing it, will I not be considered mad by some or suicidal by others?

Of course you may say that he was doing the Father's will, but that is already a faith expression. As a matter of fact, everything you say in the paragraph which begins with "Now look at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ...." is an expression of our faith, our confession, not a fact which non-believers would accept.

Thus your first statement is correct — truth is apprehended by faith — which is why we find ourselves defending the rights of cultists be they the Heaven's Gate variety or the Mormon variety.

John Van Schepen
Bellflower, Cal.

Response:

Self-sacrifical love can be understood by unbelievers, I believe. They are capable of it themselves.

If I place the castration and mass suicide of Heaven's Gate cultists next to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in terms of affirmation of life, I think an unbeliever would see the second one as more life affirming, even though he or she may not eventually believe it.

Why do we preach the gospel to unbelievers? Does nothing we say make sense before they believe? Are there no connecting points? Can we never appeal to their sense of fairness, justice, love and honesty to make the gospel appealing? I say Yes, based on the fact that we are all created of the same stuff and made in the image of God.

Also, within the belief system of unbelievers, there are things that we can appeal to, just like Paul appealed to the unknown God within the belief system of the Greeks. Within their belief system are things revealed to them through general revelation, the revelation we have in common with them. **Editor**

Church should speak to government

Stephanie Baker Collins

David Koyzis raises some important questions about the role of the church in speaking to government (CC, April 18). We can benefit from further dialogue on that issue.

Koyzis argues that the distinction Reformers draw between the church as institution and the church as body means that the church (as institution) should not speak politically. This distinction, however, is not adequate in itself in discussing how the church relates to government. We also need to distinguish between institutional callings or spheres of competence. When we understand these distinctions, it is possible to assert both that the church (as institution) *should not* speak politically and that the church *should* speak to government.

Let me try to explain what I mean.

We believe as Reformed Christians that God's rule extends to all of creation. Each institution (family, church, school, business, media, government) has a calling from God and a corresponding sphere of competence. For example, the church's sphere of competence relates to the theological, the government's to the public and legal, and the school's to the educational.

Fluid exchanges

Each of these institutions "speaks" to the others all the time. The government, for example, speaks to churches on public/legal matters such as ensuring that church buildings are equipped with access for the disabled, or setting out procedures for proper incorporation. A family may speak to a school regarding interpersonal concerns about how their child is being treated in the playground. Rather than remaining within rigid institutional boundaries there are fluid interchanges between institutions.

But these exchanges ought to be based on a distinction between callings and areas of competence. The government should not tell the media how to report the news. Businesses should not tell schools how to educate. In addition, the church ought not to speak to government with detailed policy proposals about public/legal matters. But that doesn't mean the church as institution shouldn't speak to government. In fact, churches spoke to government in Kuyper's day as well.

Theological perspective

It does mean that the church and the state bring a different framework/perspective to the issues discussed. The church's perspective is theological and the state's public/legal. The church can and should bring a theological perspective to bear on public/legal matters. But it needs to be clear when it speaks to the state (and vice versa) that its task, its arena of responsibility, is theological, not public/legal.

This distinction is also important for the pietistic churches that Koyzis refers to. In the U.S. in particular, these churches have shifted from silence about political matters to engaging in Christian political action in large numbers. But they are failing to make the distinction between the role of the state and the role of the church. Many of them would like the state to take on a theological role, and to impose a Christian morality over all areas of competence. They would like to assign a theological competence to the state.

I have drawn a distinction between institutional calling and areas of competence. Let's also look at the distinction between the church as institution and the church as body.

Biblical norms

The Christian Reformed Church's Committee for Contact with the Government calls attention to "the relevant biblical norms for justice and to root questions that shape political decision-making." It tries to focus its work on the norms or principles rooted in God's Word, while it encourages Christian political movements to contribute appropriate political policies.

These distinctions are helpful. If we draw too rigid a boundary between the various institutions, however, we can fail to make important connections on issues that cut across numerous institutional boundaries. When missionaries encounter human rights abuses, should they not alert the church to such abuses so the church can communicate to its own and to the host government about this issue? The letter to the Nigerian government from the Reformed Ecumenical Council is such an example. Paul Marshall recently chided churches for their silence on the persecution of Christians around the world.

Overseas development workers may witness unjust social and economic behavior on the part of wealthy nations that adds to the misery of those they are working with. Should that knowledge not be part of an educational presentation about their work on a trip home, and should the denomination not be alerted? When we fail to do this kind of connecting we may be unknowingly contributing to policies that are detrimental to the very persons we are trying to help through our development work.

And what would happen if we were to withdraw the voice of the church in calling for protection for unborn children, in protesting the growth in government sponsored gambling, in protesting assisted suicide, and so on?

No consensus needed

One additional reason given for not speaking to government is Koyzis's concern that disagreement about issues carries with it the risk of alienating church members. It is not possible for an institutional church to develop a position on an issue that will have the agreement of every member. But it would be a shame to interpret such disagreement as meaning that those who disagree are "less than fully members in good standing." Is our membership in the church based on agreements on issue positions?

Should we feel free to walk away from each other over such disagreements? We are doing so in increasing numbers. Perhaps then we are making an idol out of the institutional church and forgetting its roots and foundations in the body of Christ. Ought we to be more faithful to our positions than we are to each other?

Stephanie Baker Collins is a researcher for Citizens for Public Justice who lives in St. Catharines, Ont.

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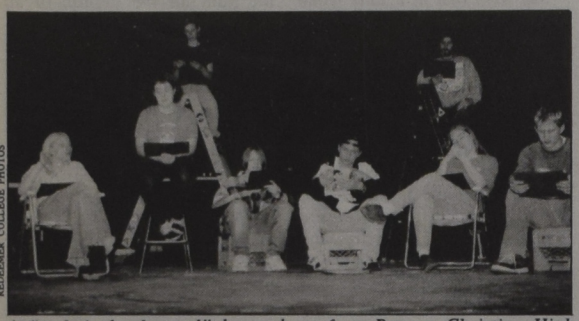
More students than ever encounter 'miracles, mystery, magic' at Redeemer drama festival



REDEEMER COLLEGE PHOTOS

A "technical rehearsal" by students from Beacon Christian High School, St. Catharines.

Vaughn Gowling

ANCASTER, Ont. — Five years ago the idea of a drama festival for Christian high schools was first discussed with teachers from the high schools and representatives from the theatre arts department at Redeemer College. Within a year the first drama festival was a successful reality, and now in its fourth year the festival has become a tradition.

This year's participation of over 180 students from nine different Ontario Christian high schools made it the largest festival to date.

"Miracles, Mystery, and Magic!," the theme for the festival this year, allowed the participants and the workshops to focus in on the roots of theatre in religion and the role of the medieval church as "the keeper of drama." The theme was also decided upon to provoke reflection on the current relationship of artists to both the society and church at large. The logo was created by professional theatre designer Nicholas Longstaff and shows a band of travelling players joyously moving from one town to another carrying the various dramatic elements they need to produce their plays.

Much variety

Participants began to arrive at Redeemer College at noon on Thursday, May 8, with their own sets, costumes and make-up in tow. Each school came prepared to perform a 20- to 45-minute play or portion of a play. That evening's barbeque dinner was rained out, but the excitement of all participants was strong as festival chairperson and Redeemer theatre arts professor Raymond Louter opened the festival. The curtain went up at 7:45 p.m. for the first three plays. The plays throughout the festival were varied in style — musicals, comedies, dramas, readers' theatre — but all shared excellent production values.

This year's adjudicators were Larry O'Farrell from the Faculty of Education at Queen's University; Glenys McQueen-Fuentes, a professor of acting and directing at Brock University; and Michael Shamata, the artistic director of the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario. After each group of performances the adjudicators shared their comments on the plays with all gathered to watch. They then retired to a classroom for some private adjudication time with each performing high school. Adjudicators fulfilled the double roles of critiquing performances and presenting their own special dramatic skills in workshops.

Ten different workshops offered topics including improvisation, choreography, make-up, special effects with lighting, and storytelling.

Vrenia Ivanoffski, artistic director of the NCT Studio in Toronto and faculty member of George Brown Theatre School, led a workshop on the art of storytelling. She commented on how she always looks forward to the Christian High School Drama Festival as sincere respect for artists and their work is always realized there.

And students weren't the only ones who learned. Adjudicator and workshop leader Glenys McQueen-Fuentes asserted that "the workshops I saw were quite astounding! I came away with a treasure chest of new ideas, food for thought, etc."

A student gets 'made up.'

After lunch on Saturday and a final wrap-up to discuss what the students thought of this year's festival, participants gathered in the auditorium for an awards ceremony. Many certificates of excellence and several plaques for outstanding performances were handed out.

But the Christian High School Drama Festival is not just about awards, says Ray Louter. It is a time to celebrate God's creation through creativity, to appreciate the work of others, and to learn and share. With this meaningful mandate, plans for the Fifth Annual Christian High School Drama Festival are already beginning.

Vaughn Gowling is a senior student at Redeemer College majoring in English and Theatre Arts.

Participating schools and the plays they performed:

~ Quinte Christian High School: *Snakes for Hair*
~ Niagara Christian Collegiate: *Cinderella*
~ London District Christian Secondary School: *Oliver*
~ Chatham Christian High School: *Won't You Stay Until Morning*
~ Beacon Christian High School: *Clown*
~ Toronto District Christian High School: *Cinderella*
~ Woodland Christian High School: *Cruisin' the Net*
~ Durham Christian High School: *Where is Thy Sting?*
~ People's Christian Academy: *Laziest Man in the World*

Magazine celebrates opera's 150th year in Canada

Fastest growing art form in Canada

(Canadian Scene) — Last summer, Robert Schmidt, an immigrant from Germany who operates a farm in Glencolton, Ont., realized a dream. He staged a production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in his barn and attracted 3,000 visitors. This summer, he plans not only to revive the Mozart opera but also to present Handel's *Messiah* and Lehar's *Merry Window.*

This is one of the many fascinating items in the spring issue of *Opera Canada,* which is also the 150th anniversary issue for opera in Canada. Wayne Gooding, its editor says that, in terms of public interest, opera has become the fastest growing art form in Canada. He attributes much of that to the legendary Ruby Mercer, the remarkable woman who founded *Opera Canada* back in 1960.

International respect

When Opera Canada first saw the light of day, it was a humble, but nonetheless influential, newsletter. Today, as a quarterly magazine it's the oldest surviving music periodical in Canada. Throughout the pages of the anniversary issue, you'll find tributes to Ruby Mercer who remained its editor for most of its life and is still its honorary chairperson.

Now in her 90s, Mercer came to Canada from the U.S. where she had sung with New York's Metropolitan Opera and in Broadway productions.

With financial help from the late philanthropist Floyd Chalmers she started the publication and worked as its editor on a voluntary basis until her retirement. An officer of the Order of Canada and a recipient of many other honors, Ruby Mercer has drawn accolades from opera's most distinguished figures, including Lotfi Mansouri, Joan Sutherland and Placido Domingo, tributes from whom are included in the anniversary issue.

Richard Bradshaw, artistic director of the Canadian Opera Company says: "*Opera Canada* is something of which we should be proud. Ruby Mercer created an arts publication which is respected throughout the world. It is informative, opinionated (in the best sense) and it has the best listings of what is happening elsewhere. It celebrates Canada and at the same time remains truly international. Long may it flourish."

Passion play ruled too violent for Australian school children

SYDNEY, Australia (EP) — Protecting children from violence is a worthy goal, but when the Monteagle Public School in New South Wales, Australia, banned an Easter passion play this past March, some felt they had gone too far.

The passion play, portraying the trial and crucifixion of Christ, had a 12-year-old child carrying a weighty cross. During the mock crucifixion, clothes were ripped off the young actor who played Jesus and fake blood suggested wounds. The principal suspended performances in a nod to government anti-violence guidelines for schools. State officials supported that decision.

Rev. John Edmonstone, president of the New South Wales Council of Churches, had much to say about the matter. Edmonstone pointed out that school curriculum correctly included accounts of bloodshed occurring during early European settlement but wanted to ignore the historicity of Jesus' death.

"Plans to ban the traditional passion play at Monteagle Public School, in the NSW rural area, is reverse discrimination at its very worst," declared Edmonstone.

"This time this group of people assigned the responsibility of improving our children's education has gone too far and has moved way beyond the group's mandate or curriculum watchdog into a blatant anti-Christian stance which highlights their ignorance of the historic fact recognized the world over that Jesus Christ was crucified."

Edmonstone added, "To use the pathetic excuse that the passion play for the Scripture classes at the school contravenes the state government's anti-violence stance is a total absurdity."

Ottawa prof calls for integrity of Christian agencies

Stan de Jong

ETOBICOKE, Ont. — According to law professor M.H. Ogilvie, Canadian Christians believe in at least seven deadly myths which she characterized as "self-deceptions of self-importance." These myths "predispose Canadian Christians toward a serious misunderstanding of their true legal status in Canada today.

Ogilvie spoke at a seminar organized by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities earlier this year. The seminar was attended by nearly 600 pastors, church administrators, lawyers and representatives from Christian organizations.

Ogilvie, who teaches at Carleton University in Ottawa, in a carefully argued paper, proceeded to debunk the myths many Christians continue to entertain about the relationship of the Christian churches to the Canadian state, explaining that these myths are "outdated and dangerous."

Ogilvie succinctly laid out these myths.

It is a myth:

- that Canada is not only a Christian country but is so recognized by the civil law;
- that, although Christianity is not, in some sense, the officially recognized religion of Canada today, it continues to enjoy some greater measure of privilege and legal protection than other religious and secular ideologies;
- that Christian churches are entirely free to determine their own affairs within their own kingdoms without state or judicial intervention;
- that Christian churches are free to disobey the secular laws with impunity as long as they follow to the letter their own practices and procedures;
- that the law in Canada is particularly concerned with ensuring the integrity and longevity of Christian churches and institutions *qua* institutions, as corporate entities;
- that Christian churches enjoy complete or almost complete freedom to shape and determine their present role in Canadian society and their outreach into that society;
- that, in addition to shaping their present, Christian churches and individuals of faith also enjoy the right in law to shape their future, that is, their children.

Bulwarks against the state

How do Christian churches, individuals and institutions respond to the challenges before them? Ogilvie suggests the importance of strengthening Christian institutions *as institutions.*

She says that at a time when real Christians are aliens in relation to the dominant cultural and moral norms of Canadian society, "Christian institutions acquire significance as centres of meaning, reinforcement, refuge and empowerment for ordinary believers — as bulwarks against the world, against the state."

It is important now to ensure the institutional integrity and financial solvency of these institutions, said Ogilvie, "by efficient stewardship of their personnel and temporary property, which remains extensive, if not always well-managed."

"Church administration, whether at the national or congregational level, is no longer a marginal or glamourless vocation, but vital to the institutional and social future of the Christian churches," she continued.

An important mandate

Ogilvie concluded her lecture with a clarion call to the packed hall. She challenged the audience by urging them to see the institutional integrity of churches as a mandate from God. "The church is the Body of Christ, both invisible and visible, and the repository of the Scriptures and the inheritance of the faith for the faithful of all generations," she said. "Its calling is to preach the gospel from generation to generation and to invite into its midst all whom God has chosen. Without the visible church, the gospel may no longer be heard in the land. Effective stewardship of the good gifts — the temporal gifts — God has bestowed on his visible Kingdom is required of all to whom they are entrusted for the advancement of his dominion from sea to sea."

Ogilvie is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the author of many books, including the recently published *Religious Institutions and the Law in Canada.* She is a frequent contributor to Canadian and international law journals.

Her paper entitled, "The Seven Deadly Myths — What Every Church Administrator Should Know About The Law in Canada Today" can be ordered by sending $5.00 to Canadian Council of Christian Charities, 28 Arthur Street, Elmira, ON N3B 2M5 (mention CCCC Bulletin April 20, 1997).

Christians face persecution in Egypt

CAIRO, Egypt (EP) — Anti-Christian propaganda is making life difficult for evangelical and Coptic Christians in Egypt.

In February, 12 Christians were killed inside a Coptic church in Abu Qurgas. A 22-year-old Egyptian convert from Islam to Christianity has faced repeated arrests and subsequent torture by Egyptian security police after his conversion was reported in a newspaper. Last year 90 Christian homes were razed by a mob spurred on by remarks from a local Muslim sheik.

According to Compass news reports, such activity is fueled by inflammatory speeches from Islamic preachers, anti-Christian radio or television programs or illegal cassettes allegedly produced in the Gulf states and smuggled into Egypt. Many of the tapes oppose Christian evangelization of Muslims. One widely distributed tape claims that the Coptic pope tortures Islamic fundamentalists by throwing them to lions.

Anti-Christian sentiment is so strong Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak made a point of condemning sectarian divisiveness in his annual Labor Day speech. Earlier, a Moslem Brotherhood leader had remarked that Coptic Christians should be denied leading positions in the Egyptian military in case the country went to war with a Christian nation.

Mubarak asserted that Christian Copts should be allowed the same rights and responsibilities as others. The Egyptian president blamed Moslem militants and unnamed foreign sources of encouraging sectarian strife in Egypt, as part of a continuing attempt to overthrow the government and establish a strict Islamic state.

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Uphill battle for women clergy

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (EP) — Female clergy are still behind their male counterparts in pay and promotion, according to a national study to be published this year. Women pastors make an average of $5,000 less in salary and benefits than men with comparable experience, researchers at Hartford Seminary discovered.

The study also found that men are more likely to be appointed to solo pastorates and to senior positions. The study, to be published as "An Uphill Calling: Clergy Women and Men in the Contemporary Protestant Church," compared male and female clergy in 15 Protestant denominations.

Bishop walks for his people

SIOUX LOOKOUT, Ont. (The *Sioux Lookout Bulletin*) — An Anglican bishop concerned about abuse in First Nations communities is walking 3,000 kilometres through northwestern Ontario to show solidarity with abuse victims.

"We must show we care," says Bishop Gordon Beardy of Muskrat Dam First Nation, who became the Anglican church's first aboriginal diocesan bishop in 1995. "I'm walking to show our people that we must help ourselves in order to get help."

Beardy and a group of followers recently finished the first 1,000-km. walk along winter roads, raising $34,000 along the way.

Not what the church had in mind

MINEOLA, N.Y. (EP) — Money placed into the church poor box is meant to help those in need. But at St. Ignatius Loyola Roman Catholic Church in Hicksville, on Long Island, they would prefer that the needy not simply help themselves. The church set up surveillance cameras to catch a burglar who was stealing money from the boxes. The convicted thief, William Hepworth, was sentenced to at least three-and-a-half years in prison for the theft, and faces additional time for parole violations.

German church leaders want media regulation

FRANKFURT, Germany (EP) — Germany's Protestant and Catholic churches issued a joint warning April 30, saying that media power is being concentrated in too few hands. The church leaders called for greater regulation of media, including the Internet. "Existing forms of regulation and voluntary control must be expanded in light of the demands of new media technology," argued Bishop Karl Lehmann, who heads the German Catholic Bishops Conference.

He noted that commercial exploitation of sex and violence is on the rise, and suggested that voluntary action by providers could make government action unnecessary. The head of the Council of Protestant Churches in Germany, Bishop Klaus Engelhardt, warned that society was being divided into information "haves" and "have nots."

Satellite to link Christian radio across Latin America

CARY, N.C. (TWR) — Building on more than three decades of ministry throughout Latin America, the international religious broadcaster Trans World Radio (TWR) is expanding its English programming to the countries and islands of the Caribbean, paving the way for an extensive pioneering satellite linkup with local Christian stations throughout the region.

Last month TWR increased its English programming to 14 hours daily from three hours each day of Christian programming to the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao and to Venezuela. Broadcasts are aired via a 50,000-watt AM transmitter located on Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles, off the northwest coast of South America.

Plans are underway to make available these same programs by satellite downlink to the approximately 20 Christian radio stations scattered throughout the Caribbean, as well as to other stations that air religious programming on Sunday mornings. This phase is scheduled to take place later this year, possibly by October.

Unprecedented potential

"The development of an English Christian radio satellite network is one of the most exciting projects in the Caribbean evangelical community in many years," says Rev. Gerry A. Seale, general secretary of the Evangelical Association of the Caribbean. "Through this incredible medium, the potential for impacting the entire region is unprecedented. Our association fully endorses this initiative, with the confident expectation that it will be a mighty tool in God's hands for the expansion of His kingdom."

The projected audience will include current TWR listeners throughout the Caribbean, including some of the larger eastern islands such as Grenada, as well as some 200,000 people who already listen to English programs in Venezuela. In addition, the increasing numbers of vacationing English-speaking tourists who travel to these islands will be among potential new listeners.

"The Christian community in the English-speaking Caribbean has been fragmented, and we expect that the extended ministry of Trans World Radio will bring about a networking of ministries which will result in a thrust of evangelism which has never been witnessed previously," says Rev. Holmes Williams, a highly regarded pastor on Barbados. "These added ministries will equip Christians to assume their responsibility to carry out the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations."

The program schedule will be similar to that of a Christian station format in the U.S. — 50 per cent music, 30 per cent Bible teaching, 10 per cent news and information, and 10 per cent geared for the family. The mix will feature programs from well-known North American broadcasters — including Tony Evans, Chuck Swindoll, James Dobson and Joseph Stowell — and respected church leaders in the Caribbean itself. Musical selections will have a distinct Caribbean flavor.

Latin American Context

Tom Corcoran, TWR's regional director for Latin America, says a senior government official on Bonaire specifically requested programs that will tackle from the Christian perspective such issues as marriage, the family, child-rearing, alcohol and drug abuse among youth, and physical and sexual abuse of children.

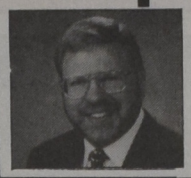
"As I've travelled and talked with Christian leaders throughout the region, I've detected a real hunger for programming and music that speaks to them within their own cultural context," adds Scott Hollinger, TWR's program director on Bonaire.

Spiritual nurturing is a major component of TWR's overall ministry. Listeners who write directly to TWR seeking further help in their Christian life receive a personal reply and practical Christian literature. People are always encouraged to become involved in a local church.

"There is clearly a respect for Trans World Radio throughout Latin America," Tom Corcoran says. "Because of our long and positive history, people in the English-speaking Caribbean are trusting us to fill a major void that exists right now by providing via satellite these 14 hours of quality Christian programming over their local stations. This is historic."

Peace-loving wisdom

Chapter & Verse



★ Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
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"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving..." (James 3:17).

For many years our family has sponsored a child in Africa through the Compassion International assistance organization. We began doing this when we returned from our term of missionary service in Nigeria. Since our girls were all very young while we lived in Africa, we were certain that they would soon forget their playmates. We thought that by corresponding with an African "sister" they would grow in their appreciation for some of the culture they left behind when we moved back to North America.

Hategekimana

Our first African "child" was a young girl named Hategekimana and she lived in Rwanda. Her picture was prominently displayed in our home. Our daughters sent her little gifts when they celebrated their birthdays. We eagerly read her translated letters when they arrived in the mail, and sent her notes of encouragement and appreciation.

In the early 1990s social violence reared and spat in Rwanda. The majority Hutus struck in vengeance against the ruling Tutsis. In a matter of months the soils of Rwanda were washed with blood, and our Hategekimana disappeared. A note came from Compassion officials one day describing the torment and anguish ripping at the country. All expatriate personnel had been evacuated, and it might be months before anyone could re-enter Rwanda. They hoped, with us, that Hategekimana would survive.

We prayed for peace. We prayed for Hategekimana and her family. Yet when the Compassion officials risked their lives to return, Hategekimana was nowhere to be found. Did she die in battle? Was her house burned around her? Is she a nameless refugee in the camps of Zaire and Burundi? Quite possibly we will never know. Hategekimana is gone. We still pray for her and her family at our meal table. But none of us has hope any longer that she will be found.

Without Hategekimana we might easily have ignored the pain of Africa. After all, the violence there was a world apart from our secure isolation. But she brought it home to us. She made us understand again the measure of John Donne's verse:

No man is an Island, entire of it self;
every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were;
any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee (Meditation XVII).

To us Hategekimana is like that patch of red in Steven Spielberg's powerful film *Schindler's List*. Spielberg wanted to personalize the pain of the Jewish people in the Warsaw ghetto who were rounded up like frightened lambs and herded to carts of slaughter. The movie was filmed in the haunting shades of gray, somewhere between the hope of white and the despair of black.

In this particular scene, however, where the camera panned back to show the global scope of hell erupting on these people from street to street and block to block, Spielberg caught our attention and kept us spellbound by painting one faint spot of color. He brushed in the swatch of red fabric of one young girl's coat.

While the horrors raged and the people ran, our eyes were fixed on this rosy cipher. We watched her get tangled in a mob rushing hopelessly this way and that. We saw her tell-tale coat peeking from behind a brick corner in a useless attempt at hiding. We picked her image out of a crowd being mowed down with furious fire from Nazi guns. And then we wept when her little red form was tossed onto a cart for disposal with the rest of the "garbage" removed from the street the next day.

Sometimes the news desensitizes us to the pain of violence. We're spectators of wars on television. We hear words about "murder" happening to people we don't know. We read studies documenting brutality and abuse among families living in other cities. From the immunity of our recliners we surf through the channels to find something fun and entertaining and thank God for our "peace" and "safety."

Prince of Peace

But isolation is not peace. James doesn't tell us to ask for ignorance. Instead, he instructs us to pray for wisdom. The wisdom that comes from above. The wisdom that brought the "Prince of Peace" to wrestle with the powers of violence and to allow them to spend themselves in hurt upon him.

Why?

Because he knows Hategekimana by name, and he will not stay in the isolation of heaven until she is found safe in the care of her Father and his family. Just read the tell-tale splotches of red that he paints across the grayness of human history.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

Feature

In the footsteps of a child

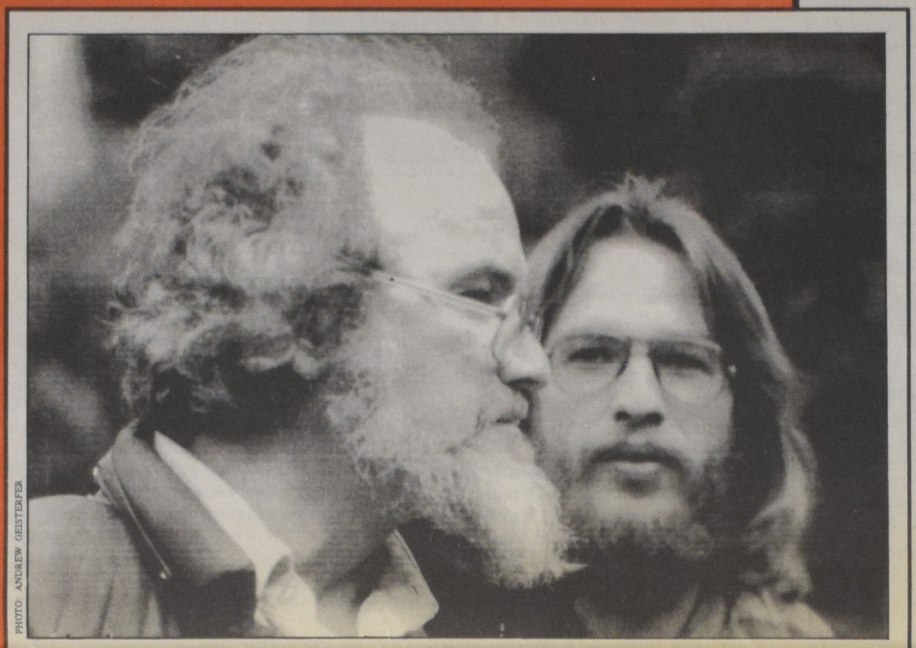


PHOTO: ANDREW GEISTERFER

(Father) Aren Peter Geisterfer and (son) Michael Raymond Geisterfer. Picture taken approximately summer of 1975.

A son traces his father's legacy of pain

Michael Geisterfer

When I was about 11 years old I heard the story of a child my age who used to wait on the front steps of his house for his father to come home from work. He would wait there sometimes for more than an hour, craning his neck for the first glimpse of the headlights and the billowing dust that would mark his father's return home.

Every morning before his father left the boy would throw his arms around his dad's neck and say, "You're coming back, aren't you?" and his father would smile and say, "Yes of course I am coming back. There's nothing to worry about." Then he would kiss him on the top of his forehead and walk out the door.

The father would say, "Don't worry," but the child would still worry. He heard them talking late at night when they thought he was asleep, their voices rising sharply in the clammy heat of the darkness, and he knew *they* were worried. An important decision needed to be made.

Soon. Before it was too late.

"We could go to Australia," he heard his mother say. And silence from his father. Sometimes there would be nothing in the stillness of the night but the tinny sound of the radio announcer reading the news. Something called Japan was poised to invade Indonesia. And whatever Japan was, he knew for certain that Indonesia was home. Which is why, each morning, just as his father was getting into his 1936 Nash Roadster to go into the office in Malang, he would rush into his arms and say, "You *are* coming back, aren't you?"

Of course, my child. I'll be back. I would never desert you.

Except one day the boy sat on that porch until it became dark and there was no familiar roar of the Nash's engine, no billowing dust, no headlights coming into view. He waited until his eyelids grew heavy with sleep, until he could barely hold his head up. His mother finally brought him in off the step. His father didn't come home. Not that night. Not the next.

Not ever.

He had been arrested by the Japanese military, put on a train for a detention camp somewhere in the interior of the island of Java and was never seen again.

A few days later, billboards began appearing all over Indonesia depicting two large blue eyes and the slogan: "Beware, the eyes of the enemy." All those of Dutch European descent were rounded up and sent off to similar camps scattered throughout the island of Java. Those who for 300 years had been rulers of the Indonesian archipelago now became its dispossessed.

When the boy finally emerged from his own camp four years later, he was little more than a skeleton, a thin waif dressed in rags and now searching, not just for his father, but for his mother as well. On Aug. 17, 1945, he hobbled a few kilometres down the road that separated him from his mother's camp, and in the pandemonium of mothers reuniting with their children, he learned that his own mother had just died of starvation.

No one had any news of his father.

*****

When I was 11 years old I woke up to the fact that not everyone's daddy had grown up in a concentration camp. Only mine had. And I began to wonder about the nature of his terrible suffering.

On the surface at that time, he did not appear to suffer at all, and indeed, he believed that God had healed him. He was a strong and powerful man, almost invincible, as if the camp experience had, for him, been like passing through the fires of hell; as if he had been purged and purified.

Creative energy flowed through him like a river, and if he suffered, he didn't show it. This fact intrigued me. Where had all his suffering gone? How could someone suffer that much and still embrace life with such abandon?

Often in life things happen without us fully understanding why. We try to make sense out of them the best we can. This was a case in point. Given the circumstances it was plausible to believe that his suffering as a child had somehow been redemptive. Like Job, God had tested him and found him to be worthy. His faith had not wavered through it all, and God had thus bestowed upon him life in even greater measure.

As compelling as this theory might have been, it had one major flaw. What kind of a God would subject an 11-year-old child to that kind of terror simply to test the boy's love for him? It didn't make sense to me. God could not be that cruel or sadistic.

*****

I grew up struggling with this question, not simply because of my father's experience, but because when his suffering finally began to surface it became clear that it was no longer his alone.

Like a body that suffers when one of its own is in pain, the entire family began to carry the weight of his terrible legacy. My struggle to understand the nature of this pain propelled me to look further afield for answers.

One day about 15 years later I found myself walking down the streets of the town of Bussum in the Netherlands, the same streets where my father's ancestors walked prior to going to Indonesia. I had the name of a man — Hans Kielsen — and an address scrawled on a tiny scrap of paper. Kielsen is one of the foremost therapists working in the field of what has been termed Concentration Camp Syndrome, a severe form of post-traumatic stress disorder. He works almost exclusively with those who were imprisoned in camps as children. I was curious to find out from his perspective how these imprisoned children, now adults, managed to deal with their pain.

I found the house in a quiet residential area of Bussum, and a kindly old lady led me into the dark interior of a library where books lined the walls from floor to ceiling. After a few minutes, Kielsen himself came in. A thin man with wise, gentle eyes and grey hair, he spoke to me of the pathology of a most unusual kind of suffering.

"Normally when the human spirit experiences a traumatic event, you can tend to the wound and, in time, it will heal," he said. "In the case of your father and those like him who were children when they entered the camps, what they experienced is a massive trauma from which they will never fully recover. Their wounds are like physical amputations, exposed as they were to intense and ongoing physical, mental and verbal abuse."

They were terrorized, and whereas an adult might rationalize the abuse in terms of political warfare, a child has no such point of repair. For him or her it is pure chaos, an incomprehensible madness.

If there were no mechanism to deal with the onslaught of destructive stimuli, children would probably die out of sheer terror. But the human psyche has a protective device that allows even children to reframe the world so that it makes sense to them.

One of the ways the psyche employs to do this is to allow the child to feel that he or she is

in some way responsible for the punishment being inflicted. Such children, in essence, take upon themselves the sins of the world; for them, this explains why they are enduring such terrible punishment.

There is an innate need in the human spirit, according to Victor Frankl, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp in Poland, to extract meaning from even the most senseless of human experiences, particularly when it comes to suffering. This is an *a priori* need, especially for children.

They need to make sense of the world, and children will automatically allow themselves to feel they are being punished for some terrible sin rather than face the untenable reality that none of it makes sense. Their suffering thus becomes a form of expiation, an atonement for a sin that, given the ferocity of the punishment, must have been despicable indeed. In this scenario, once payment has been made, they should be free to get on with their lives.

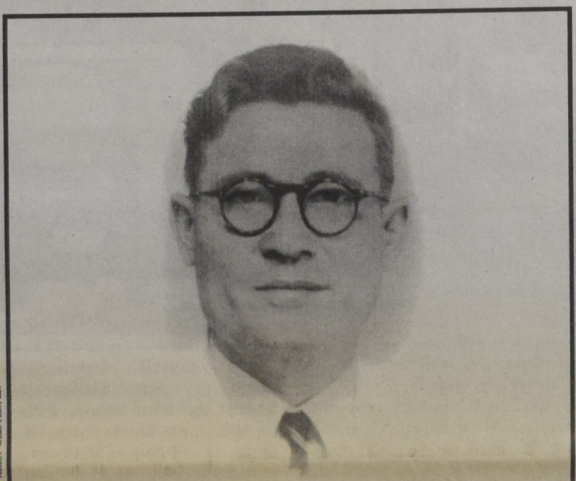
Unfortunately, this is rarely the experience of the camp children. According to Kielsen there is a clear ebb and flow to the type of suffering that such children would have endured. Most of them never experienced true liberation, not even when the Japanese surrendered in 1945 and the camp gates flew open. A significant number of them committed suicide immediately following their release, unable as they were to cope with a world that allowed such patent evil to occur.

For those who survived, the initial post-war years were spent in rebuilding their lives and returning to the land of the living. These would be years of engaging in life-affirming activities: getting a job, starting a family, building a home.

When they were young, said Kielsen, they had energy to both repress the memories and get on with their lives. To the outside world (and themselves) it would not appear that they were suffering. Just as our physical defense systems put the body into a state of shock after trauma is sustained, so too does the psyche automatically shield the ego from the intensive pain. It waits for the ego to gain enough strength to deal with the incredible pain it is carrying.

This ego strength is not to be confused with ego-centrism, which is itself a compensatory defence mechanism. Ego strength, according to the Jungian psychotherapist Frederick Blum, is the accumulation of enough positive life experiences for the individual to feel that he or she is truly loved and that it is thus safe enough to deal with one's repressed trauma. It is the inner knowledge that the experience will not destroy them.

Unfortunately for the camp survivors, this reassurance is not necessarily a given. My own father has often asserted to me that if he had to deal with his experiences, he would commit suicide. Indeed, when he attended the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camps in Amsterdam in 1995, there were those present who that same day went out and took their own lives, 50 years after the fact.



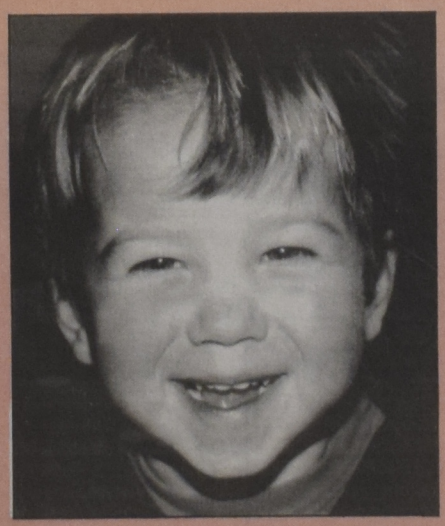
PHOTOS COURTESY ARIEN GEISTERFER

(Grand)father Johan Machiel Geisterfer Feb. 3, 1896 - ± Sept. 6, 1945

As sad as this is, according to Kielsen it is not surprising. As they grow older, their capacity to repress their memories diminishes, and these memories become like dark waves crashing incessantly on the shores of their conscious lives. Innocuous events, such as being stopped by the police for a speeding violation, can trigger flashbacks of the horror they endured. The older they get, the more powerful the memories become.

*****

Not too long ago I had to attend a meeting in Toronto. I arranged to stay at my father's place overnight in Hamilton before driving back to Ottawa the next day. That night I entered the house quietly so as not to awaken him and was about to climb the stairs to my bedroom when I noticed a soft blue light flickering from the living room. I walked silently to the door and saw my father sitting alone in front of the television set watching a video of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camps in Indonesia. He didn't know I was there and I stood leaning against the door frame for about 10 minutes watching as the images on the screen washed over him, and through the hunched frame of his stooping shoulders, and through the tears that flowed silently down his cheeks and into his grey beard, I could see clearly the silhouette of an 11-year-old boy still sitting on the steps of his front porch, waiting for his daddy to come home.



(Grand)son Julian Michael Geisterfer, Feb. 4, 1993

*****

Sometimes I wonder what hope there is for my father, this aging child of the camps. Will he hobble to his grave like a mortally wounded soul? Sadly enough, I think he will. In a 1985 article on the subject he wrote: "I know that at the end of my life here on earth I will be with Jesus. Then I will weep profusely at his bosom." I'm sure Jesus will have tremendous compassion for him when that moment arrives. I imagine Christ looking at my father even now with eyes welling with empathy. Much was asked of my father in this lifetime, and he gave much in return.

In my heart I believe that whatever mistakes my father made in his lifetime, whatever sins he committed will be washed away in Jesus' undying love for him. His journey was never meant to be undertaken alone. In fact, it may take generations to reach completion.

When the Israelites left Egypt, it was not necessarily those who set out on that journey that ended up crossing over into the Promised Land. A grandparent might have started out with that goal in mind, but then died along the way. His or her children would have carried on, and it may have been the grandchildren who actually set foot in the Promised Land. But when they did, they did it on behalf of all those who came before them.

So too, the journey of my father's family and those like him. The personal liberation of the freed will have the effect of freeing those who in their lives seemed shackled by suffering.

In my case, I am the grandchild of a man I have never met, yet whose actions still reverberate in my life. My grandfather was born at the cutting edge of a massive change in Indonesia, the last generation of Dutch merchant colonialists who for 300 years had pillaged and occupied Indonesian soil.

Recognizing the grievous injustice of it all, he chose to remain in Indonesia rather than flee to Australia in the face of an imminent Japanese invasion. He wanted to support the burgeoning Indonesian independence movement.

That decision sealed his fate. He allowed himself to become the sacrifice for 300 years of Dutch colonialism, an occupation that historians describe as often being cruel and ruthless. This is, of course, the great sin that my father would have felt he had committed as a child. It was not his personal sin, but like his father, he bore the brunt of the punishment.

Except he survived. His pain, being too great for him alone to bear, was passed on to his children. They may choose to pass it on to their children, or they may deal with it. In either case, the opportunity is there for redemption.

Redemption is the fruit of forgiveness, and forgiveness stems from understanding. If I can understand why a certain person acts in the manner that he or she does, if I can place that person's struggle in some sort of historical context, then I can forgive him or her. If that person is me — the grandchild of an honorable, though perhaps misguided man — then I can forgive myself for the pain that I still carry.

As for my father, he may not have to wait until he dies to feel the arms of Jesus enfold him. When he walks into our house now, my four-year-old son, Julian, invariably goes running up to him, a look of supreme joy and pleasure on his face. His love for my father is unconditional, unlike my own which, though great, is wounded.

Julian and my father will sit together for hours, watching a movie on television or reading a book. And when I see them like that, enfolded in each other's arms, I cannot help but feel that their mutual adoration is a reflection of an even greater Love that tenderly embraces them.

And in those moments my father's pain seems to disappear.

Michael Geisterfer is a writer and social worker who lives in Aylmer, Quebec.

Feature

In a world brimming with despair

Before pronouncing the benediction on our worship, Professor William Zurdick, a Dutch pastor who served in the Resistance against Hitler, would charge his students (I among them) to: "Confirm your faith in a life filled with love; be aware of the responsibility of your church in a world which, on this day, is brimming with despair; and go from this place, seeking to bring the love of Christ to everyone you meet."

Art White

The bumper sticker said: MY MOTHER-IN-LAW'S CAR IS A BROOM. I wondered what kind of a man would choose to make such an announcement to the world? I also wondered about his wife. Was she there when he picked it out? Did he ask, "Wouldn't this be nice on the truck?"

Impatiently, I swung in behind their vintage pick-up after waiting cautiously long for oncoming traffic to clear. Floppy grocery bags and a 12-pack of Moosehead Ale shared the wooden box with a rat's nest of fish net, bald tires and other sundries fit for the dump. Smoke poured from a dented muffler swinging loosely in its cradle of wire and rusty strapping.

What's with this guy, poking along, chatting up a storm with a woman I took to be the daughter of the mother on the bumper sticker?

He wasn't chatting, I could see that now. He was yelling: mouth open for emphasis, lips hard-set. His shoulders were heaving the way shoulders do when you yell. He was pointing and nudging, flipping his hand around, shaking his head, hardly ever looking at the road, shouting at her and carrying on. He was some mad! She never looked at him, never.

I turned on my lights, hoping he'd see me and pull over; hoping he'd see me and pay attention to the road; hoping he'd stop yelling.

His attention did turn momentarily when his front tire left the pavement and rattled along the uneven shoulder; but soon enough he was back to ragging in her face.

She seemed small (perhaps she was scrunched down on the bench seat). I saw only the side of her face and her left shoulder.

I had been drawn to this drama like a voyeur, but now I was fed-up. I felt trapped, unable to assist.

She wore a dark coat and scarf, her hair, also dark, rounded smoothly in silhouette. He wore a black and red checked jacket, too short in the sleeves, and dug, every now and again, at a clump of unkempt hair beneath his blaze-orange cap.

BERT WITVOET

The truck angled across the double yellow. He wasn't watching. A small car tooted brashly as it swerved to avoid them. The woman pursued the sound of its course over her shoulder and said something as he righted the steering and flashed his indicators for an upcoming left turn onto Keefer Road.

I saw her lips moving. She was younger than I had imagined. Her eyes caught mine for an instant before he shoved her face forward, holding a threatening finger to her cheek, ranting all the while.

I had been drawn to this drama like a voyeur, but now I was fed-up. No, I was angry! All this was closer to cruelty than I cared to go. I felt trapped, unable to assist. I turned my lights to high, as if that would help.

About the time I did, I saw his arm swing across the cab and smash the woman full in the face, knocking her head against the tri-part window between us. (Snap!) Revulsion filled my riveted attention with a mega-dose of endocrine chemistry. I found myself lightheaded, numb, my palm hard-pressed against the horn button, letting its annoying blare police this brute-assault and in some sense vent my own outrage.

I surprised myself. I wasn't helpless after all. I didn't let up on the horn. I wouldn't. I couldn't.

His brake lights flashed. He wheeled around in an instant, his ruddy face filled with riot. He stared right into me, we were that close. The truck slowed down to turn across traffic, sped through the intersection and slid to a stop at the far corner. I pulled over to stand vigil, never letting up on the strident horn. My arm was shaking, I had held it so long. It served as righteous salve to my stubborn anger.

The driver's door burst open and with a force sufficient to nearly shut itself on the rebound. He elbowed it open a second time, stumbled out, turned slowly for a second as if to get his bearings, then stepped deliberately in my direction. He was unsteady. His motions were that of a drunk: ungainly and inefficient, almost comical in retrospect, although certainly menacing at the time.

Wildly slurring churlish threats, he entered the line of traffic heedless of several vehicles which swerved to miss him. He was burly but not tall, endowed with an upper bulk tapered to a spindly waist, which put me in mind of a drumstick with clothes. He moved with difficulty, leaning forward as if into a windstorm, his arms hanging loosely, two fingers on each hand pointing oddly toward the ground.

I released the horn and engaged the clutch at the same time. He stopped in his tracks and looked with consternation as I drove away. We "connected" in that quick moment, exchanging silent declamations face-to-face. I can still feel it.

As can I feel the impact of the next sight seen in the corner of my eye: their truck was moving! The old truck was moving away from the intersection where he stood fist-shaking into my mirror. Who would have believed it? She had summoned courage and taken charge. I cheered aloud and raised a salute for small victories against despair... until the greater consequences of her world's reality began to sink in.

I thought about that nameless woman all day long, and prayed for her well into a restless night.

Art White is a writer and retired pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Canada who lives in Clementsvale, N.S.

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Kuyper's devotional classic renovated for next century

Bert Witvoet

Near Unto God

By Abraham Kuyper, adapted by James C. Schaap.

Grand Rapids, Michigan: CRC Publications and William B. Eerdmans, 1997. ISBN 1-56212-254-1 (soft-cover). 235 pp. $14.00 (US), $18.90 (Cdn).

For years I have had a 1979 paperback edition of Abraham Kuyper's *To Be Near Unto God* in my nightstand. The copy I have is a 1925 translation from the Dutch into English by Rev. John Hendrik de Vries. It contains 110 meditations on a single thought from Psalm 73:28: "But as for me, it is good to be near God."

I cannot say that I have read many of these meditations, perhaps a total of 12 in all. That is partly because they are quite long for a late-evening devotion and partly because the style is fairly dense and old-fashioned. Yet I am strangely attracted to the depth of feeling and thought that Kuyper's reflections emanate. And when I do take the trouble to read or reread one of them, I am richly rewarded.

"Schaap ... has adapted Kuyper's devotions to our times. The language is now contemporary, the examples are updated and the meditations are mercifully shorter."

Today I am excited. My unadulterated Kuyperian bowels rejoice (note: I did not say Kuyperian "heart," since that place belongs to Christ). I hold in my hand a copy of Kuyper's meditations that is as new and refreshing as the brook for which the dehydrated deer in Psalm 42 pants (see final meditation in the book). James C. Schaap, a professor of literature at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, has adapted Kuyper's devotions to our times. The language is now contemporary, the examples are updated and the meditations are mercifully shorter.

Why did Schaap undertake this project? He is, as he writes in the introduction, "someone shaped by the work of a portly historical figure named Abraham Kuyper," not because he has read so much of this man's prodigious output (he hasn't), but because the man's ethos has shaped his life.

Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Seminary in California, had recommended the book as his favorite non-fiction book, and Schaap found a copy of *To Be Near Unto God* among books he had inherited from his grandfather. It was the same translation I have been reading, but a much older copy dating back to 1918.

He loved what he read: "I was impressed, not only with the range Kuyper must have had over both this life and the next, but also with the nature of the deep spirituality that drives the book."

Before long Schaap started editing and rewriting these meditations which, he writes, "needed badly to be freed from prose as exaggerated as the wings on an old Chrysler." However, he decided to maintain the King James translation for the Scripture texts Kuyper used because of the specific biblical language on which the meditations are built. This gives the adaptation a certain authenticity.

The primacy of the will

To give the reader an idea of how well Schaap has transformed these meditations written in 1908, let me place two de Vries and two Schaap sections side by side.

In "If any man will do his will" Kuyper talks about the primacy of will in some religious circles over against an emphasis on doctrine or on sentiment in others. De Vries rendered it as follows:

"And so, a tendency developed everywhere which excelled in that it could boast of its exhibition of Christian works, and fell short in that it underestimated the creeds and mysticism.... And even in the Salvation Army, which is the most sharply defined example of this will-tendency and at the same time its most spectacular expression, there revealed itself a many-sided activity on behalf of the unfortunate, which aroused sympathy even in unbelieving circles. What remained, however a matter of regret was the one-sidedness of such an endeavor, which from the first, incurred the danger of forsaking justification by faith, and of putting in its place salvation by good works."

This is how Schaap rendered that section:

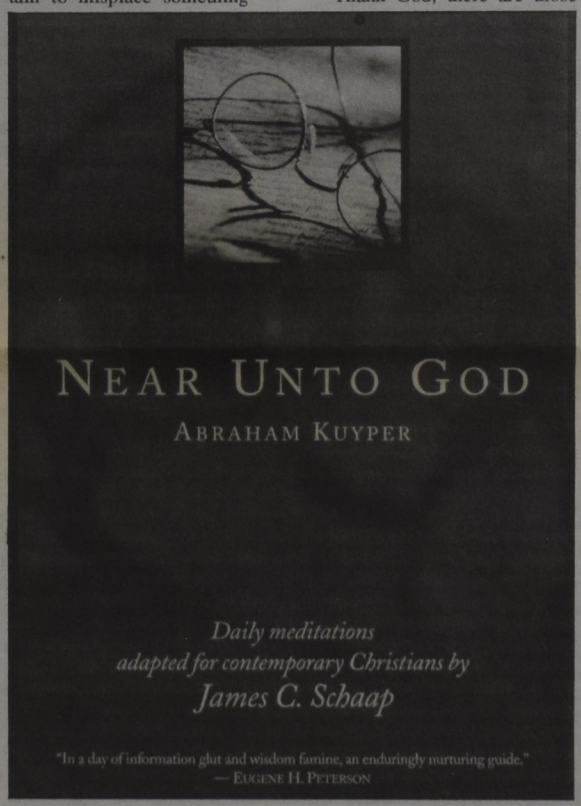
"Whenever we put all our eggs in one basket, we are certain to misplace something — and we did. No single Christian organization so clearly represents today's Christian will as the Salvation Army, a group dedicated to doing the work of the Lord. The church today has itself invested deeply into the idea of will, of doing good, and we have sturdy biblical foundations for believing as we do.... But the real danger is that in our quest for good works we simply hurdle our personal relationship to God to assert that salvation is simply an outgrowth of will, of *what we do*."

In his meditation "From strength to Strength" Kuyper addresses the need for all of us to grow spiritually. He says it's an unlimited process. But the ordinary course of events is that believers stop growing, even backslide. De Vries translated it this way:

"One feeds on what spiritual capital was acquired during this first period of grace. One increases fairly well in knowledge, also in spiritual experience and spiritual wisdom, but it does not come to higher strength....

"Thank God, there are those who as shining lights shed luster upon the life of the congregation, and who until they die, do not cease to take full draughts, again and again, from the cup of grace.

"And yet how wholly different would be the revelation of the Kingdom of heaven among our people, if all believers, if all they who are conscious of the fact that they are children of God, from the hour of conversion until the day of death, would continually cause the call of *onward and forward* to find its echo in their soul. Who can say what it would be in your heart, in your home, in the Congregation of the Lord, if with all of us it were, and continued to be, an ever constant and unceasing going from *strength to strength*."


NEAR UNTO GOD
ABRAHAM KUYPER
Daily meditations
adapted for contemporary Christians by
James C. Schaap
"In a day of information glut and wisdom famine, an enduringly nurturing guide."
— EUGENE H. PETERSON

Schaap wrote this up as follows:

"For most of us a certain level of faith becomes more or less fixed. We don't grow. We begin to feed on what happened to us earlier in our lives and start to tell old stories almost exclusively. We might grow a little smarter, gain in experience and even in spiritual wisdom, but we don't come to a higher strength in our walk with God....

"Not everyone, however. Some saints act like giant floodlights, showering everyone around them with grace. Some older folks never cease taking full draughts of God's love from the cup of grace. Some grow from strength to strength.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all grew continually in the faith? Try to guess what life might be like in your family, in your church, even in society, if all of us moved so constantly, so unceasingly, from strength to strength. Just imagine."

Strong floodlight

These samples show that Schaap remains faithful to the intent and content of Kuyper's meditation (I'm assuming that de Vries gave us a more literal, complete translation of the original Dutch version). The thoughts and convictions showered on us by this giant floodlight from a century ago have not been dimmed, but rather brightened by the evocative prose and sensitive editing of James Schaap.

The work has elicited songs of praise from such Reformed stalwarts as Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. and Lewis B. Smedes. Plantinga writes on the back cover: "Abraham Kuyper's meditations — so simple and musical — heal the soul. They are songs in the night, and James Schaap has pitched them perfectly for a contemporary audience."

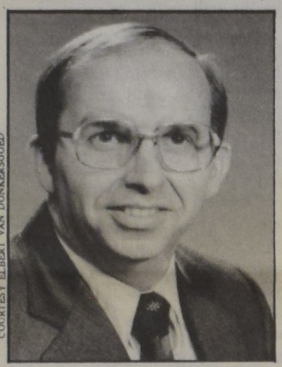
Bible translator Eugene H. Peterson calls the book "in a day of information glut and wisdom famine, an enduringly nurturing guide."

This book is a must for those who dare call themselves "Kuyperians" and a precious gift for all those who want to be, if not Kuyperian, at least near to God.

Ontario Christian farmers explore new environmental aid

GUELPH, Ont. (CFFO) — The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario is researching a creative new way to encourage farmers to protect the environment.

At its spring provincial board meeting in Milton, Ont., delegates from the CFFO's 22 districts decided to explore the potential of adding a new environmental component to an existing farm financial protection plan. The program being investigated is called NISA (Net Income Stabilization Accounts).



COURTESY ELBERT VAN DONKERSGOED

Elbert van Donkersgoed

"We think there's no room to explore using NISA to help create on-farm projects aimed at protecting the environment," said John Markus, president of the CFFO. "The total dollars in NISA accounts are climbing and could be put to creative use by farmers in protecting water, air and soil."

NISA is now the primary long-term government mechanism for transferring financial support to farm families. The program is funded by producers themselves, along with a matching contribution from federal and provincial governments.

Save farms first

"One of the key things in making a revamped NISA work well will be to strike a good balance between financial and environmental protection," said Elbert van Donkersgoed, research and policy director of the CFFO. "At its core, NISA accounts need to maintain enough money in them to help farmers through bad years. However, when an account's balance gets past a certain point, there may be room to use excess funds to help protect the environment."

One idea that CFFO delegates are becoming comfortable with is that a producer needs to have at least two years of disaster protection in his or her account before monies can be withdrawn for environmental initiatives. It's a bare minimum that a number of CFFO delegates believe covers the risk their farms face from weather and disease.

Another idea that has met with wide support is a lowering of the maximum amount of government money that can go into a producer's NISA account. The CFFO is calling for NISA maximums, on the government's contribution, to be reduced to $125,000 per farm business.

"The CFFO has a long-standing approach that says government support needs to be targeted to actual needs," said Markus. "Financial programs are supposed to be for those bad years that farmers experience from time-to-time, but they're not there to top up a farmer's income. That's why we support a lowering of how much money government puts into NISA."

Three criteria

Regarding the environmental side of NISA, CFFO delegates want to make sure that any projects carried out by farmers actually serve the public good. They envision several criteria for making that happen.

First, a farmer wanting to trigger the funds in his or her NISA account needs to complete an Environmental Farm Plan and have it endorsed by a local peer review committee. Second, the initiative needs to be on a list of projects pre-approved by the farming community. Third, all environmental projects related to livestock or manure handling need to be carried out with an adequate landbase to ensure that manure is utilized well.

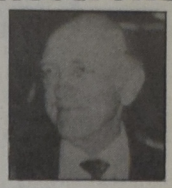
"There are a host of good environmental projects Ontario's farmers would undertake, given the right incentives," said van Donkersgoed. "A revamped NISA would go a long way towards opening up those possibilities."

Further research will be done before the NISA idea is reintroduced to the CFFO's provincial board. The board is the policy-setting mechanism for the federation.

Farmer: unpaid servant

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



I recently walked out to the corral in the morning two weeks before lambing to find ewes standing here and there, wool and flesh torn from their bodies. Others huddled together in fear and exhaustion. In the back corner of an open-front shed was a tangle of 27 bloated bodies, legs thrust upward. They had suffocated under the flock piled up by vicious predators. Over the next few days two severely wounded ewes died and eight ewes aborted for an over-all cost value of $10,000.

At 3 a.m. the following Sunday morning we were awakened by barking. We went out and, with my wife holding the light, I shot one of several dogs sitting outside the corral contemplating another sheep chase. Twice since then we have been visited again by dogs, but without damage.

We had been told that all winter a pack of up to 10 dogs, country residential pets, have been roaming the countryside terrorizing livestock and deer. Our county police handled over 700 dog complaints in 1996. Unfortunately, people who move out to the country do so to have dogs which they allow to run free.

'New rural' obliviousness

Lately I have given a lot of thought as to how rural and urban people interact, and how much our lives really do intersect. The dog disaster is a graphic example of an indirectly urban-originated cost to me, a farmer. Admittedly the cost incurred was brought on by what is known as "new rural" people, people who live in the country but do not derive their living from the land. And only a few farmers experience these direct attacks on their enterprises. But there are costs all farmers regularly absorb for services and amenities enjoyed or available to everyone wherever they live.

The scenic and restorative country spaces everyone values and expects to be there are cared for by farmers, and their taxes pay for the roads into them. The greenery that cleans polluted city air, the marshes that hold back floods and recharge the water table, the wide open spaces that renew the spirit of urban people are all there to a large degree courtesy the farmer. More and more, farmers are realizing the significance of their non-food contributions to society.

Dr. Peter Apedaile, consultant on rural development, farmer and former university professor, says that the establishment of urban-rural social contracts is important. Farmers ought to receive financial returns from the services and amenities they provide for the benefit of everyone.

Farmers being pressed

When city folk take a country outing, says Dr. Apedaile, there are those who realize some returns from that and hopefully a profit: golf course owners and employees, food and drink concession operators, bed and breakfast proprietors, and so on. But the people who provide the large amenities: the rolling wheat fields, the spectacular expanses of yellow canola, the fragrant clover, and who feed the deer and the ducks, do not get a cent for aesthetic and environmental benefits. Furthermore, farmers' tax dollars build and maintain the roads that provide access. It is in the interest of all to pay the farmer for managing and sustaining the countryside.

Farmers are being hard-pressed financially. As never before farmers and their spouses are having to find off-farm jobs to get by. They

JOHN MOSS, COLORPIC

will need financial compensation for their services to the public. If not, eventually farmers have to make up for it in some way. They may remove trees and drain marshes for fence-to-fence cultivation. They may build large intensive livestock and poultry operations with possible serious attendant environmental impact.

Dr. Apedaile is hopeful of an imminent change of attitude on the part of the public. He cites a city and surrounding countryside into midwestern U.S. where there is a deduction at the cash register of local businesses for urban-rural integration and the meeting of mutual needs. It is to be hoped that other communities will follow suit. Contributions of community leaders such as Dr. Apedaile and members of organizations such as Earthkeeping (Food and Agriculture in Christian Perspective) will be a key help.

Those who read this column are likely 97 per cent non-farmers, thus reflecting the general population. As one of the other three per cent I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on urban-rural contracts.

Vern Gleddie is a sheep rancher near Edmonton. He is active in Earthkeeping, the association of Christian farmers in Alberta

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births $25.00
Marriages & Engagements $40.00
Anniversaries $45.00
2-column anniversaries . $90.00
Obituaries $45.00
Notes of thanks $35.00
Birthdays $40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Thank You

NANNINGA:

Thank you so much for the many tokens of love and attention received at the occasion of our 50th wedding anniversary.
Thanks to the Lord for a truly unforgettable day.
Whitby, May 7, 1997
Derk and Rie Nanninga and family.

Interested in placing an ad?
Get in touch with us for details.

Thank You

SPEK:

Since it is impossible to thank everyone in person, we would like to express, in this way, our thanks to all who have sent us cards, letters, etc., and for all your prayers and support during Ype's illness and passing away. Praise be to the Lord!
Tena Spek and family, Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont.

VISSER:

We had a tremendous response to our anniversary ad published in Christian Courier, May 2, 1997, and we thank each and everyone for their love, thoughtfulness and acts of kindness. May God bless you all!
Jan and Eelkje Visser, 40 Elm Street, Apt. 312, Chatham, ON N7M 6A5

Marriages

HOFSTEE-DESROSIER:

Congratulations to Michael and Michelle on the occasion of their wedding!

John and Beatrix Hofstee of Listowel, Ont., are pleased to announce the recent marriage of their son

MICHAEL HOFSTEE
to
MICHELLE DESROSIER

in Lombard, Ill., on May 24, 1997. The groom is a graduate of Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont., and the National College of Chiropractic, Lombard, Ill. The bride is a Delaware native and a graduate of Purdue University. She is an electrical engineer and employed by Motorola. The newlyweds are planning to settle in North Carolina. Congratulations Dr. and Mrs. Hofstee!

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER
Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
Write to:
#12 923 2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7

Anniversaries

Oentsjerk Bowmanville
1942 June 6 1997

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations" (Ps.90:1).

As a family we hope to celebrate the 55th wedding anniversary of our dear parents

JELLE and JISKJE REKKER
(nee VAN DER BEEK)

We pray that the Lord will continue to watch over them and be their source of strength and guidance. We love you Mom and Dad, Pake and Beppe, Grandma and Grandpa.

Richard (Siebe) & Lucy — Bowmanville
John & Pat — Bowmanville
Joe & Diane — Courtice
Sylvia & Dirk — Kingston
Harry & Nellie — Millbrook
Julia & Frank — Hastings
20 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Home address: R.R. #6, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K7

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Jelle and Jiskje Rekker on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary!

Middenmeer Smithers
the Neth. B.C.
1957 June 7 1997

"Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. For his lovingkindness is everlasting" (Ps.106:1).

With joy and thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

MARK and CONNIE KRYGER
(nee HAZENBERG)

Their children and grandchildren:
George & Ena Groot — Houston, B.C.
Mark, Roger, Darren, Michaela
Mike & Wilma de Vries — Smithers, B.C.
Ashley, Adam, Jamie, Brendan
Hendrik & Annemarie Van Ryk — Surrey, B.C.
Amy, Jocelyn
Joanne Kryger — Smithers, B.C.
Lisa Kryger — Grand Rapids, Mich.

We celebrated this happy event with a family reunion in Mexico, in April.
Thanks Dad and Mom!
Correspondence address:
Box 2018, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Birthdays

TREFFERS:

With thankfulness to God, we announce the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

GERTRUDE TREFFERS

on June 6, 1997.
We wish you much future happiness.
Connie & Jake de Haan — Hamilton, Ont.
Alice & Ben Greydanus — Camlachie, Ont.
five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

There will be an open house for Mom on Saturday, June 7, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., in the Clinton Chr. Ref. Church fellowship hall.
Home address: 45 Charles St., Apt. 301, R.R. 1, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0

Anniversaries

Drayton Dunnville
1952 July 6 1997

With much joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father we, the children of

HARM KELLY and AALTJE KELLY
(nee ZANTINGH)

invite you to celebrate with us their 45th wedding anniversary.

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor, blessings and prosperity will be yours" (Ps.128:1,2).

Thank you Mom and Dad, for all your love and care and especially for teaching us in the ways of the Lord. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you in the years to come.

Their loving children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:
Harry & Ina Bethlehem — Dunnville
Sheri & Arjan (fiance), Harold & Jennifer, Rachel & Mark (boyfriend), Edward, Emily
Gary & Clara Wielink — Dunnville
Michael & Nataschia (Corey, Shaniah)
Henry & Alice Wielink — Wellandport
Keith & Suzanne, Alicia & Murray (Michael), Faye & Ken (boyfriend), Henry, Sarah
Ed & Alice Kelly — Dunnville
Harm & Annette (girlfriend), Edward, Alida, Rosalie, Melissa, Matthew, Andrew
Henry & Roeli Kelly — Dunnville
Harold, Jacob, Rebecca, Henry, John, Aileen, Rosalyn, Ruth, Esther
Harold & Riemke Kelly — Dunnville
Harold, David, Hendrik, Anneke, Laura, Michele
John & Sietske Kelly — Dunnville
Harm, Tsjibbe, Edward, Amy, Hendrik
Glen & Janet Oosterhof — Wellandport
Alissa, Miranda

We invite you to come and celebrate with us at an open house, to be held for them on July 5, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall of the Bethel Chr. Ref. Church.
Home address: R.R. #8, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W7

Anniversaries

It is with great joy that we announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents

BOB and ANN BRINKERT

which was celebrated on June 2, 1997.

May God bless the years
that passed,
Give you joy for what you
share today
and grant you His continuing
love in the years to come.

From your children and grandchildren,
Ingrid & Wilfred Schilstra
Steven, Philip, Emma, Leanne
Robert & Rosalie Brinkert
Sarah, Stephanie, Robyn
Caroline & Alan Bos
Elaine Brinkert & Allen de Kroon
Address: R.R. 1, Box 837, Lyn, ON K0E 1M0

Port Credit, Ont. Norval, Ont.
1952 June 7 1997

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps.37:4).

With joy and gratitude in our hearts to the Lord, we wish to congratulate our parents,

FRANK and HENDRIKA
VAN OFWEGEN
(nee DE ZOETE)

on the occasion of their 45th wedding anniversary. May God continue to walk with you, Mom and Dad, and grant you the desires of your heart.

Love:
Jean & Andy deBeer — Saskatoon, Sask.
Jeremy, Chris, Amy
James & Donna Van Ofwegen — Brampton, Ont.
Joel, Mark
Roy & Sally Van Ofwegen — Norval, Ont.
Kristy, Jeffery, Andrew
Steve & Jessica Van Ofwegen — Orangeville, Ont.
Stephanie, Jenine
Cindy Van Ofwegen — Orillia, Ont.

Home address: 536 Guelph St., Norval, ON L0P 1K0

Classifieds

Anniversaries

Ommen Winona
the Neth. Ont.
1947 May 28 1997

BERTUS and JANSJE VELDSTRA

Congratulations Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma, on this your golden anniversary.
May the Lord bless you both, and keep you in His loving care.
Our love and best wishes.
Ria & Jim Wharrie
Lynn-Ann & Bill (Rebecca, Nicholas), Wendy, James
Albert & Akiko Veldstra
Margaret & Bob Thiel
Martin, Peggy, David
Best wishes may be sent to:
251 McNeilly Road, Stoney Creek, ON L8E 5H2

Congratulations to Bertus and Jansje Veldstra on the occasion of their 50 wedding anniversary!

1957 June 8 1997

"What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9).
With joy and thanks to the Lord, we are happy to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents,

BERT and FENNA ZANTINGH (nee VANDONKERSGOED)

We pray that God will keep them and bless them for many more years together.
Rev. Harry & Wilma Zantingh — Alliston, Ont.
Adam, Matthew, Joel, Nathan, Jacob
Alice & Bill Vermeer — Grimsby, Ont.
Keith, Richard, William, Amie
Albert & Romalda Zantingh — Belize, C.A.
Jeremy
Lynn & Uegene VanderWier — Smithville, Ont.
Scott, Janelle
Nga & Nhon Chau — Toronto, Ont.
Veronica, Serene, Cynric
Open house, Saturday, June 21, 1997, from 7-9 p.m. in the Smithville Covenant Chr. School. Best wishes only.
Home address: 57 Wade Rd., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

1957 June 4 1997

With thankfulness to God, we announce the 40th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

JOHN and WINNIFRED BRON (nee FEENSTRA)

We thank the Lord for giving them these years together and pray that God will continue to bless them in their future together. Best wishes from your children and grandchildren:
Allan & Brenda Bron
John & Janet Drent
Peter & Judy Kielstra
Bill & Tracey Bron
Eric, David, Jeffery, Brian, Wendy, Kyle, Amanda, Alaina, Courtney.
Home address: 8 Hollis Crt., Mt. Brydges, ON N0L 1W0

1927 - 1997

Congratulations and best wishes to **AUDREY and HENRY VEGTER** from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
They will be celebrating their **70th wedding anniversary**, D.V., on June 9, 1997.
Open house from 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. at Mountainview Chr. Ref. Church, located beside Shalom Manor.
Present address is: Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Open House

An open house for

MRS. GAIL SPENCER

on the occasion of **her retirement as Kindergarten Teacher**, will take place in the Cambridge Chr. School gymnasium at 229 Myers Road, Cambridge, Ont., on Friday, **June 13, 1997**, beginning at 8 p.m.

Obituaries

Veendam, Gr., the Neth.
Feb. 7, 1913 - May 17, 1997

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him" (Rom.8:28a).

SARA FLIKKEMA (nee DREWEL)

went to be with her Lord and Savior.
Predeceased by her husband Harm Flikkema, June 26, 1975.
Lovingly remembered by her children:
Fenny & Klaas Wierenga — Grimsby, Ont.
Greet & Eppe Westerhof — Doezum, the Neth.
Dick & Truusje Flikkema — Oakville, Ont.
Jerry & Stien Flikkema — Kitchener, Ont.
Mike & Johanne Flikkema — Fenwick, Ont.
Geesje & Gerry VanderLaan — Veendam, the Neth.
Jan & Annie Flikkema — Wildervank, the Neth.
Dear Oma of 18 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
The funeral service was held on May 21, 1997, in Veendam, the Neth.
Correspondence address:
Fenny and Klaas Wierenga, 374 Book Road N., Grimsby, ON L3M 2M6

Obituaries

Maasland Holland Marsh
the Neth. Ont.
Sept. 30, 1909 - May 18, 1997

The Lord took home unto Himself

JACOBUS (KOOS) VAN HEMERT

Loving husband for 26 years of Elze Grada (Esselink) Van Hemert.
Dear father of:
Rev. John & Jean Van Hemert — Vancouver, B.C.
Harry & Ginny Van Hemert — Schomberg, Ont.
Alex & Rin Van Hemert — Newmarket, Ont.
Sara & Adrian Van Luyk — Holland Marsh, Ont.
Irene & John VanderSteen — London, Ont.
Nellie & Hugh Van Dyke — Guelph, Ont.
Audrey & John Schenk — Orillia, Ont.
Christine & Cor Buikema — Georgetown, Ont.
Jim & Janet Van Hemert — Holland Marsh, Ont.
Dear Opa of 30 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by his first wife Nelly Vanderkooij and three grandchildren, Sharon Vander Steen, Gord and Nancy Riegert (Van Hemert).
"The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).
Funeral service was held on May 21, 1997, in Holland Marsh Chr. Ref. Church.
Correspondence address:
200 Holland Court, Bradford, ON L3Y 1R8

Sassenheim Calgary
the Neth. Alta.
Feb. 23, 1932 - May 15, 1997
Safe in the arms of Jesus

The Lord took home His child

ADRIAN (PIM) STARING

Beloved husband of Wietske Staring (nee Wagenaar).
Beloved father and grandfather of:
Alice & Ted Smedes — Calgary, Alta.
Tony, Trevor, Loretta, Amy
John & Sheila Staring — England
Jonathan, Laura, Gracie
Audrey & Tred Greenway — Coaldale, Alta.
Jeremy, Robin, Ian
Ken & Mary Staring — Bradford, Ont.
Ryan, Danielle
Correspondence address: 4316-33 Ave. SW, Calgary, AB T3E 0Y2

Miscellaneous

Peter Van 't Bosch would like to locate Rudy and Jopie Best. Peter and Rudy were farm hands at Kingsborough, P.E.I., in 1952/53. If you know Rudy call or write Peter at: **(403) 845-3532, Box 14, Site 9, R.R. #1, Rocky Mountain House, AB T0M 1T0.**

Miscellaneous

Christians who like writing are invited to this year's **God Uses Ink Christian Writers' Conference**, held at Guelph Bible Conference Centre in **Guelph**, Ont., this **June 12-14**. GUI is sponsored by Faith Today, a national Canadian news/features magazine published by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a brochure and registration: phone registrar **Deborah Gruchy** at **(905) 479-6071, ext. 245**; visit the Web site at http://www.efc-canada.com/WHAT/gui/gui1.htm; or e-mail ft@efc-canada.com.

Teachers

CAMBRIDGE STATION, N.S.: Kings County Chr. School, a parent-run school with 70 students in grades Primary-9, invites applications for a **possible Assistant Administrator/Teacher position**. Christian Teacher's Certificate and experience required. Please send a letter of application, resume, and a brief statement of your philosophy of Christian Education to:

Mrs. Alice Van Hattem
Education Comm. Chairperson
R.R. 2, Cambridge Stn., NS
B0P 1G0

FRUITLAND, Ont.: John Knox Memorial Chr. School invites applications for a **50% part-time music teacher** for the 1997-1998 school year. The ideal candidate will possess a valid provincial or state teacher certificate, a Christian School Teacher Certificate (CSTC) and have several years of successful experience teaching music at the Grade 4 to 8 levels. Persons interested in this position should contact:

Mr. J. de Jager, Principal
at (905) 643-2460

in order to receive application forms. Applications will be received until the position has been filled.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alta.: Rocky Chr. School, an evangelical interdenominational society school, invites applications for **a full-time teaching position.** Major responsibilities to be in Junior High English with some minor areas to be assigned. Technology teaching skills could be an asset. Duties to begin with the 1997/98 school year. Competition closes on June 7. Send resume, statement of faith and philosophy of Christian education to:

Ben Bergen, Principal
Rocky Chr. School
5204-54 Avenue
Rocky Mountain House, AB
T0M 1T3
Phone: (403) 845-3516
Fax: (403) 845-4370.

Miscellaneous

CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES

available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.**

Classifieds

Teachers

TABER, Alta.: Taber Chr. School, an interdenominational school, has **a definite opening at the Junior High level.** The successful applicant will be a committed Christian, knowledgeable about and able to articulate a reformed world and life view, and have a strong background in science. Experience in P.E., band and/or art would also be an asset. Please fax or send your resume to:

David B. O'Dell, Administrator
4809-60th Avenue
Taber, AB T1G 1E9
or Fax to (403) 223-4693
Phone (403) 223-4550

Summer Job Market

A 19-year-old Redeemer College student is looking for a summer job indoors or outdoors. I am skilled in computers, accounting, etc., and have experience in home maintenance. If you have a job for me, call Jimmy Vermeer at (905) 383-0119, Hamilton, Ont.

My parents are missionaries in Honduras. I am hoping to start classes at Calvin College this September. **I am available for summer work in Ontario on June 23.** I can work with small power tools after a previous summer in construction. I also have computer skills in most computer programs. In addition, I have my Bronze Medallion in swimming. **Please call Jordan Kater collect in Honduras at (504) 37-1485.**

For Rent

For rent: Furnished basement apartment for student. Close to bus stop, McMaster and Redeemer.
Call (905) 627-7971

For rent: Fully furnished apartment. Suitable for one or two persons. In the town of Lindsay, Ont.
Phone (705) 324-2385

Please take advantage of our monthly Business Directory. For the low cost of $25 you can advertise your business.

(Please add 7 % G.S.T.)

For Rent

For Rent in Friesland, Holland. Pleasantly furnished **private vacation home** in Oenkerk, 10 km from Leeuwarden, situated in an attractive country setting. Will accommodate up to 5 people. Large living room, live-in-kitchen, 2 bedrooms and outside terrace. $300 to $450 per week. Call or write:
D. Jullens, Rengersweg 75, 9062 EC Oenkerk, the Netherlands; 011-31-582-562600.

For rent: **Nice cottage in Lauwersoog** in the northern part of Holland. Sleeps six. Lauwersoog is located on the border between the prov. of Groningen and Friesland in natural park. Write or call:
H.J. Hiemstra
Electraweg 3
9883 TB OLDEHOVE (Gr.)
the Netherlands
Phone: 011-31-594591216
Fax: 011-31-594591402

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Calls accepted:
— John Calvin, Truro, N.S., **Evangelist Henry Boehm** of Cochrane, Ont.
— Waterloo, Ont., **Rev. Michael Winnowski**, Ministry to Seafarers, Montreal, Que.

Calls extended:
— Iron Springs, Alta., **Rev. Fred Heslinga** of First, Hamilton, Ont.

Calls declined:
— Iron Springs, Alta., **Rev. Gregg Martin** of Winnipeg, Man.

New addresses:
— **Exeter CRC**, 332 Huron St. W., Exeter, ON N0M 1S2. Phone: (519)235-2990; Fax: (519) 235-2942.
— **Rev. Hans and Trudy Uittenbosch**, 1901 Pilgrims Way, #303, Oakville, ON L6M 2W9. Phone: (905) 825-1215.

Change in times of services:
— **Calvary, Ottawa**, Ont. Evening service set at 6:30 p.m.
— **Salmon Arm, B.C.** Evening service starts at 6 p.m.
— **First, Barrie**, Ont. May to mid-Sept. services at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., mid-Sept. to end of April services at 10:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Personal

Chr. lady, 51 yrs., tall, slim, non-smoker, children grown, enjoys dancing and dining out, antiques, and country living, **seeks gentleman,** 6 ft. tall, with similar interests. Southern Ontario. Reply to: **Box 20001, Hamilton, ON L9C 7M5**

Personal

APRIL 1997

THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS:

==========

ARAUJO-MENDIETA, Olga V., born January 22, 1960.

CORNELIUS, J., born May 23, 1934, last known address: Mr. Ovingstraat 9, Klazienaveen, emigrated to Canada September 11, 1973.

van DIEMEN, Martinus Casper Johannes, born April 18, 1951 in Alkemade, maried to Wilhelmina Clazina Olijhoek, emigrated to Canada January 10, 1995.

v.d. HOUT, Ieneke, born July 21, 1943.

v.d. GEER, F.M., born August 11, 1943.

KLOOTWIJK, Frederique, born February 26, 1971.

de KOK, Gerardus Herbertus, born June 14, 1961 in Tilburg, emigrated to Canada December 2, 1996.

KOK, Jacobus, born June 6, 1932.

LUITEN, Marie Louise, born August 17, 1972 in Helmond

METSELAAR, Antonius Bernardus, born August 10, 1932, married to Anna Melanie Fransz, last known address: Gemert-Bakel, emigrated to Canada June 19, 1968.

MUL, Anne Jan, born June 6, 1967, last known address : RR2, Whitelake, Ontario.

van NULAND, Johannes Franciscus Jozef, born June 10, 1949 in Oss, emigrated to Canada August 26, 1996.

OORDT, Corinne Petra Roelfina, born September 22, 1960.

REIJNEN, Antonius Jacobus Leonardus, born July 18, 1932, last known address: Gemert-Bakel, emigrated to Oshawa, Ontario January 26, 1954.

RITZEMA, Martine Lisette, born August 27, 1978 in Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada February 13, 1996.

STAAL, Michael (Meijne), born April 26, 1939 in Leeuwarden, emigrated to Whitby in 1956/57, last known address Edmonton, Alberta.

WOLTERS, Wilhelm, born January 29, 1968.

IJZERMAN, Jan Hendrik, born July 7, 1976 in Heerde, last known address in Canada: Blackfolds.

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PASTOR NEEDED

The **Cochrane Chr. Ref. Church** is seeking a new Pastor to serve our small congregation. Our church is seeking **a retired minister for the summer months** (June 15, 1997 and on), **while we are searching for a full-time Pastor.** House available. If you feel called to serve here for a short or longer term, please contact:
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Job Opportunities

Canadian Pension Service Representative (PSR)

The **Canadian Pension Trustees** of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has a part-time, up to eight (8) hours per week, opening for a (contract) **Pension Service Representative in Canada**. The initial period for the contract, which may be renewed, is six (6) months. The purpose of the position is to provide personalized retirement planning service for active and retired participants, ordained and unordained, in the CRCNA pension programs who serve in local congregations. Duties include providing information and advice to classis regarding the pension related issues, responding to pension inquiries, and conducting monthly retirement and pension seminars. The qualified individual must have the appropriate background and experience related to the position requirements. Membership in the CRCNA and working knowledge and understanding of the CRCNA are essential.

A detailed position description available upon request. To be considered for this position, please submit by **June 27, 1997**, a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest to:

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
3475 Mainway, P.O. Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
(905) 336-2920/Fax (905) 336-8344
e-mail: COLEMANN@CRCNA.ORG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) -U.S.

The **Christian Reformed World Relief Committee** (**CRWRC**), an agency of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in North America, is seeking applicants for the position of U.S. **Executive Director**. The person chosen for this position will lead a team that is responsible for the administration and implementation of the ministry of CRWRC throughout the world. This Executive Director will also participate in the promotion of CRWRC's ministry among the membership of the CRC and other supporters, and maintain an effective co-operative relationship with many other agencies and organizations. The person chosen for this position will have an appropriate educational background (College, Graduate School). Experience in management, Christian international development, not-for-profit organizations, and organizational leadership are preferred qualifications.

To be considered for this position, please submit by **August 15, 1997**, a copy of your resume and a letter stating your interest to:

Mr. Calvin J. Hulst, President
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee - U.S.
c/o Christian Reformed Church in North America
2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560
(616) 224-0832/Fax (616) 224-5895
e-mail: tpml@novagate.com

Send your questions to
Peter and Marja.
Confidentiality is assured.

Miscellaneous

MINISTRY DEVELOPER

The **Clarkson Chr. Ref. Church in Mississauga, Ont.,** has an opening on its pastoral staff for an enthusiastic and qualified **Ministry Developer** to equip its members for outreach; to ensure an effective ministry to youth and young adults; and to enhance the congregation's spiritual life and social interaction. For more information write to:

Clarkson Chr. Ref. Church
1880 Lakeshore Road W., Mississauga, ON L5J 1J7
Fax: (905) 823-5841. Attention: Search Committee

Ebenezer Home, a Christian Senior Home
has an immediate opening for an

ADMINISTRATOR

You will be responsible for the management of the home, ensuring that a high standard of care is maintained for the residents. Reporting directly to a Board of Directors, you will demonstrate strong leadership capabilities, help implement the Christian directives and policies of the Board, manage a staff of approximately 30 and ensure that the home follows the guidelines as set by provincial health regulations and legislation.

You must possess a degree in health administration or an equivalent combination of experience and education. You must demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written form. Some knowledge of the Dutch language is an asset.

Ebenezer Home, located in Abbotsford, B.C., is a personal and intermediate care facility. The home presently has 54 beds with an additional 41 beds to be completed in the spring of 1998.

Salary is commensurate with experience.

Applications should be sent to:
The Board of the Ebenezer Senior Home Society
33433 Marshall Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 1K8

John Knox Memorial Chr. School in Fruitland, Ont., has an opening, commencing August 1997, for a

Financial Administrator

(24 hours per week)

Reporting directly to the Principal you will manage all aspects of the school's financial reporting. You will also be responsible for purchasing and materials management.

You have a CMA/CGA or are near completion and are experienced with computerized accounting systems.

Please forward your resume by **June 20, 1997**, to: **John Knox Memorial Chr. School, c/o The Principal, 795 Highway #8, Fruitland, ON L8E 5J3, Fax: (905) 643-5875.** Questions may be directed to **Anita Kerkhof at (905) 563-4211.**

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Canadian CRC restructuring at Synod 1997 would dismantle the CCRCC

That's the proposed answer to persistent requests for a regional synod for Canada.

- The new director of Canadian ministries will report to and be responsible to the USA executive director of ministries.
- Canadian denominational agencies will ultimately report to a synod overwhelmingly (75%) USA dominated.
- Thirty years of a little progress in self-determination for the Canadian churches will be lost.

At Synod, PLEASE VOTE NO!

Keep the CCRCC and give it enhanced responsibilities for Canadian charities of the churches.

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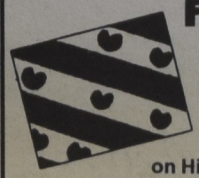

FRISIAN PICNIC

TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1997
starting at 11 a.m.
at Pinehurst Conservation Park, Paris, Ont.

on Highway 24A (4 miles north of Paris).

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

June 8 Forty-fifth anniversary celebration of Mount Hamilton CRC, **Hamilton**, Ont. Special worship service at 9:30 a.m. All former members are welcome. (#)

June 9-12 "4-Day Evening Walk," Royal Botanical Gardens, **Burlington**, Ont. Info.: (905) 383-6319 (#)

June 18 "Cypress Gardens Winter Ministry (Florida)" picnic, 10 a.m., Southside Park, **Woodstock**, Ont. Info.: (519) 475-4946.

June 11 "Hollandse Dag," 10 a.m., First CRC, Kingston, Ont. Speaker: Rev. Nicolaas Cornelisse. Cost $7.50 p.p. (lunch incl.) Info.: (613) 384-2493.

June 21 "Grunneger Picnic," 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Authority Park, **Rockwood**, Ont. Info.: (519) 235-0719.

June 24 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 12 noon, St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, **London**, Ont. Info.: (519) 725-9514.

Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

Mission Statement: *Reformed Faith Witness is a Christian ministry committed to communicate biblical perspectives on current and world events in accordance with Reformed traditions.*

Make a donation for 1997!

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a charitable organization which received tax exempt status from Revenue Canada.
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Why not take advantage of our **Calendar of Events** for your next event?

Once a builder, always a builder

Marianne Prinzen (as told by Hilda Wielemaker)

TRENTON, Ont. — Tony Wielemaker was not a man of flowery words or smooth flowing sentences but a man of deeds. It was this characteristic that landed him in the Dominican Republic and eventually in his grave.

Tony Wielemaker was a builder. But he was also a great volunteer. In earlier years, he and his wife, Hilda, were deeply involved in youth work. Both of them also used to write for *Christian Courier's* youth pages.

PHOTOS COURTESY HILDA WIELEMAKER

Tony Wielemaker (centre) helped build churches and friendships. With Tony are CharleydeVries (l.) and Klaas Koenens.

Heart and hand

All his years in Canada Tony worked in construction. At the age of 66 he built his first church — in the Dominican Republic. That was January 1995. He and Hilda were part of a volunteer team who were offering heart and hands to help fellow Christians in the Dominican Republic build a combination of church and meeting place.

It was a thoroughly positive experience for the whole group, recalls Hilda. She chronicled the event in a colorful photo album filled with enthusiastic captions.

For Tony, there grew in his heart a love for this kind of practical mission work. Thus it was no surprise to any who knew him that two years later Tony returned to the Dominican Republic as before: with a volunteer team, to build another church, finish a parsonage and clean up another little job. This time Hilda stayed home.

Time for fun

Again, the work went well, far beyond expectation. The team spirit was great. There was even an extra day left over for relaxation.

On that day, six of the team members, one of them Tony, rented light motor bikes for a sight-seeing tour. It was fun, according to his own reports. But on a downhill stretch somewhere in the hilly countryside, Tony failed to manoeuver a sharp turn and landed in a deep, stony ditch. This event abruptly changed the course of his life.

From that moment on, the battle for his life began, recalls Hilda. "God's people prayed powerfully; all the doctors and nurses who treated Tony did their best. But is seems that healing was not in the master plan. Nine weeks later, the Lord took Tony to his heavenly home, sparing him a life of pain and disability."

People will miss Tony, the solid, jovial Dutchman. But Hilda thinks he just may be helping Jesus build mansions in heaven. "Instead of spruce and oak he would be using pure gold and precious stones, and his workmanship would be flawless."

Hilda's thoughts fit Tony's words on his arrival back in Canada on February 6: "When I'm better, I'll go again and build another church."

That was Tony. Always building.

Tony (r.) gave Carlos his boots after construction work was completed in February, 1995.

Prison volunteer receives community service award

COURTESY SIP

Casey VanderStelt, surrounded by SIP directors, is shown holding his trophy. From l. to r.: Gerry Postma, Emma Winters, Robert Bernhardt, Gerald VanderWillik and Bill Boonstra.

THOROLD, Ont. (SIP) — At a recent dinner held on the grounds of the Niagara Detention Centre, Casey VanderStelt of Hamilton, Ont., along with three other volunteers, was awarded the Solicitor General's Community Service Award.

VanderStelt, who has been mainly working at correctional centres in Thorold, Brantford, Guelph and Toronto, has over the past 13 years been in contact with some of the most violent offenders.

Through a process of self-discovery (he is the founder and executive director of Self-discovery of Imprisoned Persons: SIP), he has been able to share what he calls "God's healing, forgiving and restoring grace with the whole person."

News Digest

Red heifer a bad omen?

JERUSALEM — Melody, a red heifer, was born on an ordinary farm in northern Israel last year. But to some Jews, there is nothing ordinary about her. Not since the destruction of the second temple by Romans in 70 A.D. has another red heifer been born in Israel, Jewish scholars say, reports the *Toronto Star.*

Many Muslims and some Jews are concerned that extremists might take the red heifer as a signal to destroy the two mosques which now occupy Jerusalem's Temple Mount. That would clear the way for the construction of a third Jewish temple and could provoke a war.

Religion book sales pick up

WASHINGTON, D.C. — While the over-all American book market has gone flat in recent months, sales of books about religion increased nine per cent in 1996, reports the *Washington Post.*

This trend coincides with a study by the Princeton Religion Research Center showing weekly attendance at churches and synagogues at the lowest level since 1940. The connection? Lynn Garrett, religion editor of *Publisher's Weekly,* speculates that "fascination with things spiritual" remains high, despite the decline in churchgoing, and that people are "more open than ever to dipping into traditions not our own and appropriating what we find useful."

Watch those typos

JACKSON, Miss. (EP) — The Mississippi legislature intended to honor Bishop Charles Mason, founder of the Church of God in Christ. But due to a typographical error, the state's senators actually voted to name part of the roadway of Mississippi 17 for Charles Manson, the notorious serial killer.

Mason was an African-American Pentecostal revivalist who conducted crusades in Mississippi in the late 19th and early 20th century and then led the Church of God in Christ until his death in 1961. Sen. Travis Little noticed the error before the governor got the bill.